THE THIRD REICH AND THE ARAB EAST

Łukasz Hirszowicz

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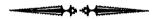
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by ŁUKASZ HIRSZOWICZ

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1966

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PREFACE

THE subject-matter of this book has not hitherto been fully treated. Some aspects, namely Nazi Germany's contacts with Arab leaders, were subjects of publicity and propaganda during 1945–8. And the Arab press has referred to them on occasion in recent years. The German-Iraqi relations in 1940–1, which are partly dealt with by Majid Khadduri in his *Independent Iraq 1932–1958*, are an exception in this respect.

The present work is based on German archive material, in particular the files and deeds of Auswärtiges Amt (those captured by the Western Allies and those returned to the German Democratic Republic by the Soviet Union), the records of the Nuremberg trials, published collections of American, British, French, German and Italian documents, and on European and Arabian diaries and memoirs. Besides, the author has made use of existing literature and official publications dealing with various phases of war operations, international relations and the internal situations of the countries considered here.

In making this book available to the reading public I would like to express my gratitude to all those who facilitated my research and aided me in the preparation and publication of this work. I would first of all like to thank the Historical Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN), and, in particular, its director, Professor Tadeusz Manteuffel, for his helpful attitude to my research and for ensuring me favourable conditions for writing this book. I am very much indebted to St. Antony's College at Oxford and to its Warden, Mr. F. W. Deakin, for the assistance, both financial and organisational, in examining German documents captured by the Allies, and in making use of the great facilities offered by British libraries, especially the Bodleian Library at Oxford and that of the Royal Institute of International Affairs. I am particularly indebted to Professors A. H. Hourani of Oxford, M. Lachs of Warsaw, J. Pajewski of Poznań and K. Piwarski of Kraków for their aid, advice and encouragement. I wish also to thank C. H. Fone, chief of the Foreign Office Library and Research Department, and his co-workers, as well as the employees of the Public Record Office of London, who made available the captured German archive material.

PREFACE

I also wish to express my deep gratitude to Professor Lötzke, director of the Deutsches Zentral-Archiv at Potsdam, and his staff, who made it possible for me to examine material preserved from the Hitler period. I am very grateful to the employees of the library of the Polish Institute of International Affairs, the library of the Central Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes, the Central Military Library, the libraries of the Historical Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences and of the Polish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. I am also grateful to Mrs. K. Skarżyńska, M.A., for aid in the transcription of Arabic names.

The English edition differs somewhat from the Polish text, since several new documents, especially on German military plans, became available to the author.

Besides the acknowledgments enumerated above, I am happy to add here Mr. Elie Kedourie, to whom I am especially grateful for his initiative in making the English edition available, and to Mr. Walter Z. Laqueur for his valuable opinion.

L.H.

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Auswärtiges	Amt—the	German	Foreign	Ministry.	

- APA Aussenpolitisches Amt—office for foreign policy of the Nazi party.
- DFCAA La délégation française auprès de la Commission allemande d'armistice. Recueil de documents publié par le gouvernement français.
- DGFP Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, London and Washington.
- DZA Deutsches Zentralarchiv Potsdam—German Central Archives in Potsdam, German Democratic Republic.
- FRUS Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Government Printing Office, Washington.
- IDDI I documenti diplomatici Italiani, Rome.
- IMT International Military Tribunal. Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg 1945–1946. 42 volumes. Nuremberg, 1947–9.
- OKW Oberkommando der Wehrmacht—High Command of the German armed forces.
- NSDAP Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter-Partei—full German name for Nazi party.
- Pol VII The VII section of the Political Department of the German Foreign Ministry engaged in Middle Eastern affairs.
- RAM Reichsaussenminister—German Foreign Minister.
- RMVP Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda.

Designation of unpublished documents

Documents from the Potsdam archives are designated DZA Potsdam followed by the names or symbols of ministries or bureaux and numbers of the record files. Documents captured by the Western Allies and now returned to the Federal German Government carry the symbols M/N, with M designating the serial numbers under which the given file was filmed and N the number of the microfilm frame. The titles of the record files serial numbers are enumerated in the bibliography.

To My Wife

Ι

THE GREAT POWERS AND THE ARAB EAST



HE background of the events related in this book consists of two processes which, however they may differ, have more than once converged and intermingled. The first is the rivalry among the Great Powers which has twice plunged humanity into world wars. The second is the desire of subjected countries to eliminate foreign domination.

In the period under consideration the first of these processes expressed itself primarily in the desire of the 'have not' powers: Germany, Italy, Japan, for a redivision of the world. The main results of this are well known: the occupation of Manchuria by Japan, the intervention in Spain, the Italian aggression against Ethiopia, the Austrian Anschluss, the annexation of Czechoslovakia and Albania, the invasion of Poland and the holocaust of World War II. The subject of our study is the policy of the chief of the 'have not' powers, Nazi Germany, in the countries of the Arab East.

EXPANSION OF THE GREAT POWERS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES

The countries of the Arab East were for a long time objects of European penetration—though to varying degrees. In the nineteenth century, that is in the period when the European powers dominated almost the entire world, these countries were at least formally part of the Ottoman Empire. But the European powers already exerted a decisive influence on the economics, political life and cultures of these lands. At the turn of the century Great Britain was supreme in her domination of Egypt; and in the countries adjacent to the Persian Gulf the voice of the British Government of India was no less authoritative than the orders of the Turkish Sultan. In 1912 Libya

was occupied by Italy as a result of the latter's war with Turkey.² By the end of the nineteenth century the interests of almost all the European powers clashed in the other parts of the Ottoman Empire.³ Besides the traditional rivals, England, France and Russia, the German Empire appeared on the Turkish arena. Western penetration took on various forms: apart from extra-territorial rights, loans to the Istanbul Government, concessions for the building and exploitation of railways, municipal investments and the operation of foreign banks, of tremendous importance were the Christian missions, schools, hospitals and the 'protection' by the Great Powers of various sectors of the local populations. Thus, France was the protector of the Lebanese Maronites, Russia was the patron of the Greek-orthodox faith, and Great Britain of the Druses and Jews. In the Arab countries situated on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean France dominated the spheres of municipal investment and railways as well as of education and culture. But other powers, too, held strong positions, among which one cannot ignore the American missions and university at Beirut founded in 1886 by the American Presbyterian mission.

At the dawn of the twentieth century the traditional rivalry which had commenced in the seventeenth century between France, England and Russia for influence and domination in the Ottoman Empire began to be overshadowed by a changed relation of forces resulting from German expansion. From the last decades of the nineteenth century until 1912 the export of German capital to the Ottoman Empire grew by nearly 500 million marks and together with the Ottoman outstanding debt German holdings totalled about 1,000 million marks. 4 The Germans were very active in railway construction and on November 25th, 1899, obtained a preliminary concession from the Sultan for the so-called Baghdad railway which was to connect Hamburg, Berlin and Vienna with Baghdad and the Persian Gulf via Constantinople. The building of this railway also involved plans to exploit raw materials, mainly cotton, as well as the oil of Northern Mesopotamia.⁵ Because powerful German banks and the armaments industry became ever more interested in Turkey, it was impossible to maintain the Bismarckian policy of désintéressement towards Near Eastern affairs. The Germans proceeded to increase their political influence in Istanbul. For his part Sultan Abdul Hamid, hoping to make use of the disagreements between the European Powers, gladly accepted the rise of German activity in his empire. In 1898 Kaiser Wilhelm II made a pilgrimage to Palestine. He ended this pilgrimage with a visit to Damascus, where he declared that the world's 300 million Muslims could count on his friendship.

At first Great Britain saw the German penetration of the Ottoman

Empire and the Baghdad railway project⁶ as a counterweight to Russian and French influence. What is more, at that time the conception of an Anglo-German combination directed against France and Russia was very popular in British ruling circles. However, after the conclusion of the 'Entente Cordiale' in 1904 and the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907, the rivalry between Britain, France and Russia abated, whereas Germany's plans to build the Baghdad railway and to extend her influence in the Near and Middle East were subjects of conflict with Great Britain almost to the outbreak of World War I. True, Britain, Germany and Turkey reached a number of agreements in 1913–14 pertaining to problems of communications and boundaries, but the outbreak of war prevented their implementation. From then on it was not negotiations but the armed struggle between the powers that was to decide the future of the Ottoman Empire and of its Arab possessions.

PLANS FOR PARTITION OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE DURING WORLD WAR I

The armed conflict of World War I and the diplomatic bargaining, promises and political agreements connected with it determined the destiny of the Arab countries over the next quarter-century. These events continued to dominate political relations and influenced the ideas of the majority of Arab leaders in the period concerned.

As is known, Turkey was an ally of the Central Powers in World War I. Hence, if until then traditional friendship with the 'Sublime Porte' had dictated caution in Britain's relations with nationalist Arab leaders, now the policy of alliance with them became an important feature of British diplomacy.

This found expression primarily in the establishment of relations by British representatives with the Mecca ruler, Sherif Husein ibn Ali of the Hashimi clan. This, British politicians were seriously disturbed that the Turkish Sultan's call for a 'holy war' (iihad) might find a wide response among the Muslim subjects of the Entente powers. The British were probably interested in winning over some Muslim dignitaries who could to an extent neutralise the effect of the call to jihad. Later the main aim of British policy was to stir up among the Arabs a revolt against Turkey, and in this they succeeded. In the middle of 1916 Arab units commanded by Emir Feisal, one of Husein's sons, fought Turkish troops first in the Arabian Peninsula, then in the north. They took Damascus in 1918.8

The basis of British relations with Husein was in the rather vague political promises contained in letters to the Mecca ruler from Sir Henry McMahon, British High Commissioner in Egypt. True, England

promised the Arabs independence in these letters, but numerous reservations were attached on the extent of sovereignty and territorial dimensions of the future Arab state. More concretely, McMahon, considering French interests on the shores of the Mediterranean and British in Southern Mesopotamia and in Aden, excluded these areas from British promises. The exchange of letters between Sherif Husein and McMahon began on July 14th, 1915.9

In the spring of 1916 an agreement was reached between England, France and Russia on the future of the Ottoman Empire. Lextensive territories in the Black Sea Straits and Eastern Anatolia were to fall to Russia. According to the so-called Sykes-Picot agreement, the Sultan's Arab possessions were to be divided as follows: the 'red' area under direct London domination; the 'blue' under direct Paris rule; the 'brown' area, comprising the Palestine shore up to the Jordan under international control; on the residual territories an Arab state or states were to be formed divided into British (B) and French (A) spheres of influence (according to the colouring and designation of the given territories on an attached map). This agreement was reached after stubborn bargaining by the Entente powers. Nevertheless, there were forces within Britain and among Englishmen operating in the Near East which tried to annul this agreement and to extend British influence at France's expense. In

On November 2nd, 1917, the British Foreign Minister, A. J. Balfour, addressed a letter to Lord Rothschild which is known as the Balfour Declaration. This Declaration resulted from negotiations which had been going on for some time between the Zionist organisation and the British Government. While promising to help establish a national Jewish home in Palestine, the British Government made the reservation that no steps would be taken there which might encroach upon the civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish inhabitants or interfere with the rights and political status of the Jewish populations in other countries. With this Declaration the British Government hoped to win the support of the Russian and American Jews for the Entente and at the same time to gain an excuse for placing under its domination the strategically important area which, according to the Sykes-Picot agreement, was to fall to France or under international control.¹²

Thus, by conducting a many-faced and seemingly contradictory policy, the British Government was preparing the ground for the future domination of the Arab East. Egypt with the Suez Canal Zone was, of course, to be the cornerstone of this domination. After Turkey's entrance into the war on the side of the Central Powers, Britain declared its protectorate over Egypt, thus sanctioning the state of affairs which had lasted since 1882.¹³

Allied with Turkey, the Germans at that time lacked real opportunities in the Arab countries for independent and separate political activity, although stirring up a movement against the Entente powers was one of their aims during the war. Their alliance with Turkey (August 2nd, 1914) had the objective, among other things, of unleashing a pan-Islamic movement, which coincided with the aim of the Sultan's 'holy war'. By means of pan-Islamism the Germans aimed a blow at the pressure points of the British Empire in India and Egypt. 14 Attempts to incite an uprising in Egypt did not succeed, since the Turko-German offensive at Suez failed. Moreover, the British had large military forces in Egypt proper, and out of fear of the pro-Turkish sentiments of large sections of the population, transferred the local army to Sudan. On the Arabian Peninsula the Germans attempted to bring Ibn Saud and Sherif Husein over to their side. In the case of the former they registered some successes at first, since they effected an armistice between Ibn Saud and Ibn Rashid, the pro-Turkish Emir of the Shammars. 15 But at the end of 1915, as a result of a meeting between Ibn Saud and Sir Percy Cox, an agreement was reached and the Wahhabi ruler received a British subsidy and renewed his war activity. 16 The Central Powers did not fare any better in their attempts to gain Husein's support and to draw him away from the alliance with Great Britain.¹⁷

One of the reasons for Germany's failures lay in the fact that the Kaiser's Government, allied with the Young Turk rulers at Istanbul, could not compete with England when it came to handing out promises to the Arab leaders. Relations between the Arab nationalists and the leaders of the Young Turks did not shape up successfully. Except for a short period in 1908 when enthusiasm reigned over the entire Ottoman Empire, inspired by the revolution, the Young Turks took a hostile attitude to the demands for autonomy and decentralisation made by the Arab nationalists. In reality, these demands often concealed the desire to separate from the Young Turkish autocracy and to lean towards the West European powers. Although there were some German troops in the Arab countries and the German army and militarism were highly regarded in the Arab officers' corps, her alliance with Turkey closed to Germany the road to the Arab nationalists. In the Arab nationalists.

But the nationalist groupings could not at that time be identified with Arab society as a whole. The nationalist idea proclaimed by secret Arab organisations and adopted by Sherif Husein and his sons, was accepted by a rather small minority of the Arab populations of the lands of the Fertile Crescent. Moreover, Arabs of the Christian faith played an important role in that minority. A considerable number of the Arab Muslims remained faithful

TRAE-B 5

to the Sultan and the Ottoman Empire as a Muslim power.²⁰

As allies of the Muslim Empire the Germans could not appeal to the idea of Arab independence; nor could they support the aspiration of Arab leaders for their own separate state. Sherif Husein and his sons saw in an alliance with England the only possibility for realising their ambitious plans. Thus Husein did not break with London even when he learned of the secret treaties for the partition of the Ottoman Empire among the Entente Powers, which were disclosed at the end of 1917 when after the victory of the October Socialist Revolution the Bolsheviks published the Tsar's secret treaties. Nor did the Balfour Declaration change the pro-British position of the Meccarulers 21

PARTITION OF THE ARAB LANDS AFTER WORLD WAR I

As is known, the war ended with a victory for Britain and France. The Ottoman Empire ceased to exist. British troops and allied French and Arab units controlled the entire area from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf inhabited by Arab-speaking peoples. Germany no longer figured as a power in the Near and Middle East. According to the Versailles Treaty (1919) the Germans were compelled to relinquish their overseas possessions and all special rights and privileges in dependent countries, such as Egypt. Germany also lost all her concessions and properties in the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria.²² After the defeat very little remained of Germany's widespread economic activity and political influence in the Near and Middle East.

The position of France in the Eastern Mediterranean was strongly affected by her need to obtain British support for her policy towards Germany and by the fact that the Arab territories were actually in the hands of the British military. The struggle between the two Allies for the division of the Ottoman inheritance ended only with the San Remo conference (April 9th–26th, 1920). The Paris Government agreed that the British should retain Mosul, which was promised to France by the Sykes-Picot agreement. In exchange for this retreat France was to maintain a share in that region's oil and to receive support on German questions. France had to agree as well to Britain's control of Palestine, which according to the Sykes-Picot agreement was supposed to become an international zone.²³

It was the Arabs who paid the price for the Anglo-French agreement, which constituted an integral part of the whole system of postwar international relations.²⁴ Contrary to the Sykes-Picot agreement, the new arrangement did not distinguish the areas remaining under direct British and French rule from the spheres of influence where

Arab state organisations were to arise. The main victim of this new system was the Arab Government established at Damascus by Feisal, son of Husein. This Government was abolished by the French in July 1920 and the entire area of present Syria and Lebanon was occupied by General Gouraud's troops.²⁵

Towards the end of the war and following it, new forces appeared on the historical arena which impelled the old imperialist powers to change their forms of rule. When the Bolsheviks assumed power in November 1917 the new Government renounced the old imperialist policies of the Tsarist régime and all the privileges Russia had enjoyed in the neighbouring Asian countries, and, instead, aided their peoples in the struggles against foreign domination. This aid, for instance, played a very important role in the victory of the Kemalist movement and emergence of a new Turkey. The Moscow Government issued the slogan 'peace without annexations or indemnities' and demanded the right of nations to self-determination.²⁶ This slogan was also supported by Woodrow Wilson, then President of the United States.

In this situation a new form of Western domination was introduced in the shape of mandates assigned by the League of Nations. According to the San Remo agreement, Syria and Lebanon became French mandated territories, while Palestine, Transjordan and Iraq were mandated to Great Britain. Article 22, point 4, of the League of Nations' Covenant²⁷ provided that the mandate holding power would extend aid and advise the mandated territory until it was fit for independent statehood.

Palestine occupied a special position in the mandate system. Her mandate²⁸ obliged Great Britain to apply the Balfour Declaration, i.e. to 'establish in Palestine a national homeland for the Jewish people'. The leader of the Zionist organisation, Weizmann, came to an understanding on this question with Feisal, who, on January 3rd, 1919, consented to the Declaration, but with the stipulation that Husein's demands for Arab independence²⁹ would be fulfilled. The liquidation of Feisal's Government at Damascus, therefore, erased his signature from under that agreement. Among the Palestinian Arabs opposition developed from the very outset to the principles of the mandate. Jewish Zionist and Arab nationalist goals proved irreconcilable. Consequently, a system of direct British rule prevailed in Palestine from the time of the country's occupation in 1917–18 to Britain's withdrawal in 1948.³⁰

Transjordan, detached from Palestine at the Cairo conference of March 1921, on the initiative of Winston Churchill—then Colonial Secretary—was turned into a separate Arab Emirate under Abd Allah, son of Husein. With the aid of the Emir, Britain established a system of indirect rule over that country, which was fairly large

(90,000 sq. km.), but sparsely populated, mainly by nomads. An obedient Emir receiving a yearly subsidy from the British treasury, a British resident at Amman, who was for some time subordinate to the Jerusalem High Commissioner, a small but efficient army commanded by British officers—these were the main pillars of British rule in Transjordan. Important changes in this system were made only after World War II.³¹

A considerable part of Iraq came under British rule during World War I. In 1920 that country was engulfed by a great national uprising.32 As a result of the above-mentioned Cairo conference the British established here, too, an indirect system of rule, while Emir Feisal became King of Iraq. A two-chamber Parliament was created in 1925 and the Government was to be responsible to it. But the Parliament represented only the narrow upper stratum of Iraq society —and not too faithfully at that—while British advisers sat in all the ministries. By 1932 the British mandate was terminated and Iraq became the first Arab country to be admitted to the League of Nations. But Great Britain retained her influence. The Anglo-Iraqi treaty of 193033 provided for a close alliance between the two and mutual aid in the event of war and a number of privileges were granted to Great Britain. These were: two air bases at Habbaniva. several dozen kilometres west of Baghdad, and at Shuaiba near Basra, Iraq's only seaport; the right to use the ports, airfields, railways, etc. Great Britain also exerted an overwhelming influence over the economy. Under these conditions, the British Ambassador plaved an exceptional role in the country's political system. However, after 1932 Iraq's ruling class enjoyed greater freedom of movement than did their counterparts in any other Arab country, with the exception perhaps of Saudi Arabia and the Yemen, situated on the Arabian Peninsula. In this situation, backward Iraq became the hotbed of Arab nationalism in the year preceding World War II.34

Besides the countries over which she held a mandate, Great Britain dominated Egypt, the Sudan and the Arabian Peninsula.

The independence struggle in Egypt, the high point of which was the 1919 revolt,³⁵ led to the British Government's unilateral declaration of February 28th, 1922. In this document³⁶ Britain proclaimed the termination of the protectorate which had formally lasted since 1914, and granted Egypt the status of an 'independent sovereign state', while reserving exclusive control in maintaining the safety of the empire communications, defending Egypt against aggression or the direct or indirect intervention in her affairs and safeguarding the interests of foreign citizens and the rights of minorities in Egypt, and in Sudanese affairs. In reality, Egypt's sovereignty was even more limited, for British troops continued to be stationed in the country

and British officials held the key positions. British capital played a dominant role in economic life, though the capitalists of other powers, particularly France, displayed considerable activity. In the interwar period, however, there was a steady growth of native capital and the rise of a native, Egyptian Muslim officialdom, professional stratum, army officers corps, etc.

After many unsuccessful attempts, an Anglo-Egyptian treaty³⁷ was finally signed on August 26th, 1936. Since the end of 1935, when Egyptian politicians had approached the British High Commissioner with a proposition to resume negotiations, the political situation had developed under the impact of the Italian aggression in Abyssinia. A wave of nationalist unrest swept Egypt. The effect of Italian expansion was a more conciliatory attitude by the British Government on the one hand and a greater inclination of Egyptian spokesmen to agree to British demands on the other. The treaty contained a number of formal concessions enhancing Egyptian prestige, but British garrisons were to remain in the country. Furthermore, in the case of war or the threat of war Egypt was obliged to aid Great Britain by extending to her the right to use airfields, ports and means of communication and to take the necessary legal and administrative steps to safeguard British interests. Britain's position in Egypt was to change radically only after World War II.38

On the Arabian Peninsula Britain's position appeared as follows. The King of England and Emperor of India was regarded as protector of the lands along the shores of the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean, that is, in Kuwait, Qatar, Oman el-Mutasali, the Sultanate of Muskat and Oman and in the hinterland of the British crown colony Aden. And the King's Resident in Bahrein was the superior authority over a whole galaxy of British residents, ministers and advisers who directed the foreign policies of the sheikhs and sultans and exerted a strong influence on the lives of those countries.³⁹ Britain's position in certain parts of this territory was not recognised by Italy, Germany and the United States,⁴⁰ but this was not of any great practical significance. The British fleet and air force completely dominated the situation and any local chief who tended to insubordination could expect nothing but repression from the British armed forces.

The largest state on the Arabian Peninsula was Saudi Arabia.⁴¹ It arose as a result of the wars conducted by Abd el-Aziz Ibn Saud. This Wahhabi prince launched his career as a refugee, having found asylum with the Sheikh of Kuwait; he succeeded in regaining his native Nejd early in the twentieth century. In 1913 he captured el-Hasa and a few years after the war became master of the entire Peninsula with the exception of the Yemen and the above mentioned

maritime territories. Of particular importance was Ibn Saud's victory over Sherif Husein in 1924-5, which brought under his control Islam's holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

Ibn Saud maintained contact with Great Britain even before World War I and concluded a treaty with His Majesty's Government in 1927. Britain did not maintain any military bases in Ibn Saud's realm, nor did she enjoy any formal political privileges. But her influence was nevertheless paramount. For Britain was much more active economically in Saudi Arabia than any other power and her influence on the King's immediate environment was considerable. British domination of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf was decisive; it meant control of Saudi Arabia's food supply, the dependence of Ibn Saud on British financial support and British preponderance in the neighbouring Arab lands. The weakening of Britain's position in Saudi Arabia was foreshadowed only shortly before the outbreak of the war, when American oil corporations discovered oil there.⁴²

The Yemen was the only country on the Arabian Peninsula which to some degree broke away from the general pattern of British domination. 43 During World War I the Imam of Yemen supported Turkey, then conducted a controversy with Great Britain for several decades over the Aden hinterland remaining a British protectorate. In 1926 the Imam concluded a treaty of friendship with Italy which was renewed in 1937, and he established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1928. His military forces proved helpless against British planes, however, and they suffered a defeat in the 1934 war with Ibn Saud. True, Italian influence rose in the Yemen, as is shown by the treaty of October 15th, 1937, but it was of limited significance. On April 16th, 1938, Britain and Italy arrived at an understanding⁴⁴ whereby they mutually agreed, among other things, not to acquire 'privileged positions of a political character' in Saudi Arabia and the Yemen. Whatever may be said about the fulfilment of this agreement elsewhere and in relation to other matters, the Italian position in the Yemen and Saudi Arabia proved very unstable.

The zone of French domination in the Arab East was much narrower than that of the British. As seen above, it embraced Syria and Lebanon, of which the formal foundation of French domination was a League of Nations mandate. It like the one held by the British over Palestine, Transjordan and Iraq, this was a class A mandate; that is, it obliged the mandatory power to prepare the country for independence. This kind of mandate hence presumed certain concessions to local nationalist forces. Many French politicians were, however, against even limited concessions, fearing the repercussions of such a policy on France's North African possessions. The High Commissioner who headed the Government in Syria and

Lebanon was often a military man. To him was subordinated the Cabinet composed of French officials occupying key positions in the departments of public safety and education, monuments, public works and bedouin control. He also controlled the customs, post, telegraph and communications as well as the garrison—composed of colonial and French troops and the local so-called troupes spéciaux (though the latter did not apply when the High Commissioner was a civilian). The local authorities set up by the French were in reality puppets. By leaning for support on minority elements and negating the national character of the countries of the Levant, the Paris Government promoted separatist tendencies. This was also the purpose of the administrative division of the countries into a number of 'statelets' such as: Lebanon, Latakia, Aleppo, Damascus and Jebel Druz, not to speak of the Sanjak of Alexandretta, where a special regime was installed. In 1936 the People's Front Government of France proposed to conclude a treaty with Syria and Lebanon⁴⁶ similar to the Anglo-Iraqi and Anglo-Egyptian treaties. But the Leftwing Government did not last and that plan was not realised. A substantial weakening of French control over the countries of the Levant ensued only during World War II.47

Such was the rough picture of the boundaries and the governments of the countries of the Arab East between the two world wars. This state of affairs was an extension of the Versailles system in Europe and constituted a part of the general pattern of Anglo-French domination. Within this framework there were practically no independent countries in the Eastern Hemisphere outside Europe; there were almost none which in one manner or another were not dependent on the victorious Entente powers, primarily France and England and the lesser West European states linked with them.

British and French domination of the Arab East extended also to the economic field. As is known, the chief question in that respect was oil extraction. And this was the background for basic political decisions in the Near and Middle East. But in this sphere British, French and Dutch capital had to agree to American participation. The 'Red Line Agreement' concluded in 1928⁴⁸ provided that the partners may acquire only joint concessions on the basis of given percentage shares. The area involved in this agreement was designated in the appended map by a red line embracing Turkey and the Arab countries in Asia, with the exception of Kuwait and a small strip of Turkey at the border of the Ajar Autonomous Soviet Republic. The shares allotted were: Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, 23·75 per cent; Royal Dutch-Shell, 23·75 per cent; Compagnie Française des Pétroles, 23·75 per cent; the two Rockefeller corporations (Standard Oil of New Jersey and Socony Vacuum) together, 23·75 per cent,

and Gulbenkian, 5 per cent. This agreement completed in a sense the regulation of questions arising from the victory of the Entente; for it pertained at the time it was signed primarily to Iraq oil, one-fourth of which was supposed to belong to German capital according to an understanding just prior to the outbreak of the war. After the war France took over the share of defeated Germany, but the British Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, under pressure of the U.S. Government, was compelled to turn over half of its share to the Rockefeller trusts. ⁴⁹ Despite its concessions to North American big capital, the Red Line Agreement consolidated Britain's oil hegemony in the Arab lands. And this hegemony was not disturbed throughout the interwar period, although the concession obtained by the U.S. Caltex consortium in Saudi Arabia foreshadowed the changes which came after World War II.

Owing to British and French political predominance, the opportunities for other countries in the fields of banking, insurance, foreign investments and trade were rather limited. This mainly affected the United States, whose share of Egyptian imports in 1937 amounted to 6.5 per cent and of Palestinian 6.9 per cent. The opportunities were also slight for German and Italian economic penetration.

This pattern of international political and economic relations found reflection in the viewpoints and political alignments of the ruling Arab circles in the various countries. The aspirations of the élite of the large nationalist parties boiled down to the desire to obtain the most convenient positions within the system created by the ruling powers. It is clear that France's policy aroused greater opposition than Britain's since France was less inclined to make concessions. Furthermore, many Syrian nationalists counted on British support. Economic questions played no small role in the relations between the Syrian owner classes and France. Thus, for instance, Syria was tied to the unstable French franc, which made her position on the world market unsatisfactory. Essentially, the Pan-Arabists were convinced opponents of the status quo in the Near East, but for an extended time important sections of the movement reckoned that Great Britain would at least help them partly to attain their goals. An accommodating, conciliatory attitude to the West characterised at the time the leading nationalist parties, such as Wafd in Egypt and the National Bloc in Syria. This attitude was shared by the important Iraqi politicians of the older generation: Nuri es-Said, Jamil el-Midfai and others. The King of Iraq, Feisal, generally highly respected among nationalists, was a prominent representative of this political orientation which corresponded to a realistic evaluation of the situation. Various minority groups, in opposition to the

main nationalist parties, represented an even more Western orientation.

ITALY AND GERMANY IN THE ARAB EAST

By the middle of the thirties the political situation had begun to change in some of the Arab countries. This was due to many causes, but foremost were the changes in the international relationship of forces and the decline of the prestige of Great Britain and France as a result of their repeated appearement of the aggressive powers. The idea began to mature among some nationalist groups of a rapprochement towards those powers, while some of the thinking of Berlin and Rome started to gain many adherents, even among conciliatory-minded politicians. In Iraq, particularly, the nationalists, especially the Pan-Arabists, assumed, increasingly clearly, radical anti-British positions. 50 In Palestine, Hajj Amin el-Huseini, chief of the dominant Huseini clan, linked his fortunes with Italy.⁵¹ At the same time groupings began to emerge which based their view on Nazi-Fascist conceptions. The Fascist organisation Misr el-Fatat, the so-called Green Shirts of Ahmed Husein, arose in Egypt, the Futuwwa was established in Iraq and the Syrian National party led by Antun Saadah emerged in Syria and Lebanon.⁵² The appearance of these groups reflected a wider phenomenon, namely the growing disillusionment with the policies of the Western powers and the ideals of parliamentary democracy they professed.⁵³ Fundamentalist groupings such as the Muslim Brotherhood, and their ideas, also began to develop against this background. These ideas played an important role in the Palestine uprising of 1936-9.54

Italy was for a long time seriously involved in the Arab countries. In the Middle Ages, Italian cities carried on lively trade with the Eastern Mediterranean. Large Italian colonies, schools, hospitals, churches, monasteries and missions existed in many Arab cities. In 1912, after her war with Turkey, Italy acquired Libya as a colony. This made her a direct neighbour of Egypt—the most important country of the Near East under British control—and of the French North African possessions. Through her possession of the Dodecanese Islands, obtained in that same war, Italy gained a convenient strategic position on the shores of Asia Minor. Moreover, the African colonies acquired at the end of the nineteenth century on the Red Sea were adjacent by water to the countries of the Arabian Peninsula, especially to the Yemen.

By entering the First World War on the side of the Entente Italy expected the considerable expansion of her Near East possessions. Thus according to the Pact of London signed by Britain, France,

Russia and Italy on April 26th, 1915, the latter was supposed to get after victory the south-western part of Anatolia with the rights of administration and occupation and the territories to the north as her sphere of influence. The agreement of St. Jean-de-Maurienne reached in 1917 by the Premiers of England, France and Italy made the provisos of the Pact of London more precise, and assigned to Italy the districts of Izmir, Antalya and Konya as well as the whole of southwestern Anatolia. Furthermore, according to the treaty of Sèvres of August 10th, 1920, and the Anglo-French-Italian agreement concluded simultaneously, Italy was ceded as her sphere of influence more or less the same territory she had been promised by the Pact of London and the St. Jean-de-Maurienne agreement. 56 But, as is known, the Turkish national liberation movement under Mustafa Kemal-Pasha succeeded in making null and void the decisions of the Sèvres treaty. Italy therefore got almost nothing in the Near East from World War I. Italian gains in Africa, too, were small, limited to the insignificant extension of the borders of Libya and Italian Somaliland. As compared with the important British and French acquisitions in the Near East and their gains in Africa, those of Italy were minimal. She hence felt herself deceived and injured. This is one reason why Italy, a 'have not' country, desired to change the status quo in the Mediterranean.

However, for an extended period the opportunities remained slight for increased Italian penetration in the Arab lands. The repressions of the Arabs in Libya did not raise sympathy for the Italians and the aggression against Abyssinia roused apprehension in the Near and Middle East. Arab leaders were well aware of the danger of Italian penetration and colonisation. The Turkish Government raised the question of Italian aggression at the League of Nations, and its position met with a wide response among the Arabs. But the international situation had its own internal logic. Italy's advance to the status of a great power was reflected in the Arab countries: in the purchase of arms, in utilising the aid of Italian air instructors, in certain personal contacts of political and religious leaders with Italian circles. We referred above to the growth of Italian influence in the Yemen. Desiring to lessen their dependence on Great Britain, the Governments of Iraq and Saudi Arabia were inclined to strengthen their relations with Italy, in particular with regard to the provision of arms. For the ability to obtain arms was an essential condition in Iraq and Saudi Arabia for maintaining internal order and even their state integrity, since the tribes disposed of large quantities of arms and were therefore able to organise rebellions. At the same time, with the increase in German and Italian expansion, Great Britain's ability to supply the Arab countries with arms (particularly with modern

weapons—aircraft, tanks, anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns, as well as the latest types of traditional weapons) continued to decline, since the London Government had worries about satisfying its own needs. Under these circumstances, Iraq and Saudi Arabia sought arms abroad, and their most willing and convenient suppliers were the Italians, who hoped to utilise the sale of arms and the training of Arab officers in order to extend their political and economic influence. Alongside Italy, who became an important supplier of aeroplanes, came Czechoslovakia, with carbines, heavy guns and ammunition.⁵⁷ Italy's economic relations with the Arab countries, her educational missions and extensive propaganda activity, mainly through the Bari radio station, were very disturbing to the British and French.

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With their defeat in 1918 the Germans were ejected from the Near East. During the Weimar Republic German political activity in the Arab countries amounted to nothing for all practical purposes. True, there were German settlers in some countries, but these were not politically utilised during that period. Germany became a member of the League of Nations in 1926 and could, formally, have had a voice in matters concerning Syria and Lebanon, Iraq, Palestine and Transjordan as mandated territories. But the Weimar Republic did not avail itself of such rather limited possibilities. It aimed, first of all, to restore Germany's position in Europe and to abolish the restrictions imposed by the Versailles Treaty. There was a natural tendency, under these conditions, to avoid political activity in territories under British and French domination. Moreover, this tendency continued for some time after the fall of the Weimar Republic.

Nor did the Weimar Republic possess the material means necessary to exert a political influence on the countries of the East. The German Navy, which played such a large role in the period preceding the First World War, had ceased to exist. German investments in the countries of the Ottoman Empire were liquidated and interest flagged in economic expansion in the Arab East. Egypt, who was one of Germany's most important trading partners during 1925-30, purchased German goods at an annual average of 60-80 million marks' worth. German imports from Egypt fluctuated around the same figure. During the Great Crisis German exports to Egypt dropped catastrophically-much more sharply than imports-and in the last prewar years stood at a much lower level than in 1924-8, amounting to about 40 million marks annually. Imports from Egypt were on the same level. As a state with a large overseas trade, Germany made much use of the Suez Canal (in 1929 her merchant ships accounted for 16.5 per cent of the tonnage handled by the Canal and in 1936 to 8.9 per cent.)⁵⁸ The Germans were interested, too, in Egyptian cotton.⁵⁹

The turnover with the other countries of the Arab East was small. German exports to Syria and Lebanon before the Second World War amounted to 5–6 million marks annually, and imports to 1–2 million. To Iraq the Germans exported in 1937 about 6–7 million marks' worth and in 1938 8–9 million. Imports from that country amounted to 1.9 million and 4.2 million marks respectively. 60 Before 1937 the German turnover with Iraq was too insignificant to be recorded in official statistics. Except for the years of the Great Crisis, Germany had a favourable balance of trade with the Arab countries.

During the 1930s Germany occupied second place in Egypt's foreign trade, but her percentage share remained far behind Great Britain's. The situation was similar with her trade with Palestine; but she was comparatively at the bottom of the list in foreign trade with Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. ⁶¹ By comparison, Germany's trade with Turkey and Iran—where her share continued to rise rapidly in the '30s (about 50 per cent of Turkey's foreign trade turnover)—leads to the conclusion that the Arab countries played no important role in Germany's economy either in the Weimar or Nazi periods. And her chances for expanding trade with those lands were not very good.

We emphasise the question of foreign trade because Germany sought in the Arab countries primarily outlets for her goods. Characteristic in this respect was the fate of the British Oil Development Company, which in 1930 obtained concessions to explore and extract oil in Iraq on territory not already the preserve of the Iraq Petroleum Company (I.P.C.). Documents⁶² relating to the share of German firms in this enterprise suggest the conclusion that Germany was not overconcerned with oil or foreign investments as sources of capital gains or of enterprise profits. By participation in this company they mainly hoped to obtain new orders for equipment⁶³ and generally to create additional markets so necessary for German firms. Owing to their inability to meet financing difficulties, the Germans gave up their share in the British Oil Development Company in 1936. The Italians, who were much more influential, followed suit and the company fell into the hands of the I.P.C.

The pursuit of markets and intense drive for foreign currency were also the causes of another attempt to step up economic activity in Iraq, namely the 1937 negotiations on the supply of arms. ⁶⁴ After the *coup d'état* of October 29th, 1936, a Government was established in Iraq which was more determined to become independent of Great Britain and to build up its army more rapidly. It may therefore appear that the conditions favoured Germany's political and economic

penetration. Nevertheless, while Italy tried to utilise the situation by offering Iraq arms on credit to be delivered on short terms and free training for Iraq airforce officers, the German authorities checked the zeal of their firms and restrained their Baghdad envoy, Dr. Fritz Grobba. Top officials indicated that only serious economic benefits, such as payment in cash in foreign currency, would induce the German Government to agree to export arms to Iraq. 65 As it turned out, however, the Iraq Government was not at all in a position to allocate greater orders to Germany, because of British opposition.

Nevertheless, in the prevailing difficult conditions on the world market even the small opportunities in the Arab countries played a certain role in the plans of some German firms. In so far as the big trusts were concerned, such as Otto Wolff, Rheinmetall-Borsig, Ferrostaal, Dresdner Bank, Krupp and others, their interest in Arab markets was expressed by the two above-mentioned attempts in Iraq. Smaller German firms, too, sought markets in the Near East; these were particularly the smaller arms producers, who sometimes managed to conclude small transactions.*

As we said, German economic penetration in the Near East met with the opposition of the ruling powers there. The German envoy at Cairo and the director of the Dresdner Bank branch there stressed more than once that 'any transactions on a larger scale are possible only with England's consent'.66 The situation in Iraq was similarly assessed. 67 The calculation was that the situation would be different if German equipment were of much higher quality and England could not provide similar goods, or if German firms were to act as subcontractors of large British concerns. Despite the dissuasion of Government officials, German firms stubbornly attempted to obtain orders. 68 In 1937-8 German firms made efforts to get Egyptian orders for military supplies, rights to mine iron ore at Aswan, to build ammunition and nitrogen plants as well as electrical installations. 69 These attempts generally failed. German goods which went strong in Turkish and Iranian markets played a smaller role in the Arab countries. An exceptional situation arose in Palestine in this respect, but for special reasons with which we deal later.

It could have been expected in these circumstances that Germany would take some political measures either with regard to the dominating powers or towards local circles, and that she would attempt to expand economic relations. For, as is known, the Hitler Government advanced with growing persistence their demands upon the 'have'

^{*} See the collection 'Handel mit Kriegsgerät Yemen', DZA Potsdam, Auswärtiges Amt. Nr. 68470. There are several documents in this collection pertaining to the attempts of the Yemen Government to buy Polish arms captured by the Germans in September 1939.

powers to consider German interests in the division of markets and spheres of influence. But there is no evidence that these demands related to the Arab lands.* German representatives in the Arab countries, especially in Iraq and to a lesser degree in Egypt, were vitally interested in the viewpoints of the political figures at the helm. They assumed that Arab leaders sympathetic to Germany would be more favourably inclined towards German firms and goods. But Germany's possibilities of political intervention and of influencing the course of events were not much greater. The Italians had better opportunities for reacting to political developments in the Arab East. Basically, however, British and French domination confronted no serious dangers.

It must be said, however, that the lack of any real possibilities for exerting political influence on the Arab countries or of genuine interest in economic collaboration with them did not mean that German imperialism was totally uninterested in those lands. After Hitler came to power, particularly in the last three years before the war, a clear rise in interest in Arab and Muslim affairs could be felt in Germany.70 This was expressed, among other things, by the appearance of a multitude of publications devoted to those questions. An interest, too, was manifested in the strategic importance of the Near East.⁷¹ Societies occupying themselves with the East were activated; and the Government began to concern itself with the organisation of Arab students in Germany.⁷² Propaganda activity was launched in the Arab countries.⁷³ It was no accident that in 1937 the Führer of the German youth, Baldur von Schirach, went to the Near East with fifteen co-workers, visiting Damascus, Baghdad and Tehran. A visit by Goebbels to Egypt was planned for the beginning of 1938, but it did not come off till February 1939.74 German propaganda, especially von Schirach's visit, found a strong echo in Arab countries, where the German pattern of para-military and youth organisations, some Nazi slogans and particularly the Führer Prinzip were very popular. Of course, there was a long way between the dissemination of National Socialist slogans and the influencing of current policy. Nevertheless, the Germans could note certain accomplishments on their part which they were determined to utilise at the proper time: the formation of clearly pro-Fascist groups and cells,† the establishment of contact with Arab leaders, politicians and members

^{*} In the collection 'Handel mit Kriegsgerät Ägypten', DZA Potsdam, AA Nr. 68425 there are several documents testifying to conversations in the spring of 1937 between German firm representatives and personalities from British Government circles. These dealt with the sale of arms to Egypt. The negotiations continued in the spring of 1938, but without results.

[†] However, the Germans did not regard these groups as their mainstay.

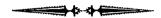
of the ruling élite, the presence at Nazi party rallies in Nuremberg of Arab politicians, etc. All this aroused the justified anxiety of the dominant powers in the Near East.

Some German political and economic circles demanded an expansion of German activity in the Arab countries. Such views were represented by Alfred Rosenberg, among others, and the Aussenpolitisches Amt of the NSDAP led by him. It can also be argued that the activity of German banks and the representatives of large industrial firms did not correspond to the actual volume of trade. In Iraq, for instance, the turnover volume was small, but it comprised a wide assortment and many German firms were involved. Before World War I Iraq was regarded in Germany as a country of unlimited possibilities. And the growth of its oil industry and of the country's importance in the world's communications system confirmed that assessment.

Owing to its growing expansion in Europe, the rise of its international importance and the tenser relations among the Great Powers, the Government of the Third Reich had to interest itself in the Near and Middle East. And the Palestine developments directly inclined the German Government to adopt a political position on Arab affairs.

H

NAZI GERMANY AND THE PEEL COMMISSION PLAN



OUTBREAK OF THE ARAB UPRISING IN PALESTINE

Great Britain held the mandate over the country, and the official goal of that mandate was to create a Jewish national home there. The immigration of Jews to Palestine and their purchase of land was an inseparable political element of the mandate. During the '20s about 80,000 Jews entered Palestine as permanent residents. Immigration amounted to 11,300 in 1932, the last year of the Weimar Republic; and the number of Jews increased three times in comparison with 1918, that is, to 200,000, constituting about 20 per cent of the population. Jewish landownership doubled in the same period, but it embraced only about 4 per cent of the total land area.

The affairs of all the other Arab countries revolved around their internal problems and imperial policies in the Mediterranean, whereas the situation in Europe, particularly in Central Europe, exerted a very potent influence on Palestine affairs. The difficult economic situation and the nationalistic policies of the governments of countries with large Jewish populations, such as Poland and Rumania, impelled Jewish emigration. Before World War I the main current of Jewish emigration flowed to the United States. Following that war, the possibility of such emigration greatly declined.

The link between Palestinian affairs and the situation in Central Europe became particularly accentuated with the advent of the Nazis to power in Germany and the inauguration there of a strong anti-Jewish policy. In other countries the local Fascist elements and anti-Semites began to regard Germany as the state which showed the way to the solution of the Jewish question and they effected the strengthening of their governments' anti-Jewish policies.¹

At the beginning, the aim of Nazi policy was to compel the Jews

to leave Germany. And Palestine at that time absorbed a large part of the Jewish emigration. Between 1933 and 1936, 175,000 Jews emigrated to that country,² but only one-fourth of them were German Jews.* The small size of the Palestine immigration before the Great Crisis was due to its pioneering character at the time rather than to British limitation. But the situation completely changed in the '30s. Leaders of the Jewish Agency regarded the British quota as inadequate.

Great Britain administered Palestine in the same manner as she did her crown colonies. An underlying principle of her administration was that of equal and compatible obligations under the mandate towards the Jews (creation of a Jewish national home) and towards the Arabs (defence of the rights of the Palestinian Arabs).† This principle was crystallised in answer to the protests of the Palestinian Arabs against Jewish colonisation and British domination. However, the general situation in the Arab countries made it difficult to maintain direct domination over Palestine, for the British established indirect rule in the other countries, based on an understanding with the native ruling classes. After the victory of the Front Populaire in France there was increasingly louder talk about approaching changes in Syria and Lebanon in the direction of expanding the power of the native authorities.

The increase in Jewish immigration, resulting from the intensified anti-Semitism in Europe, aroused growing opposition among the Arabs. Jewish dominance in many economic fields (with Arab purchasing power estimated at 20–25 per cent of the country's total) made the Arabs fear an eventual Jewish numerical superiority. For Jewish immigration during 1933–6 greatly exceeded the Arab birthrate.

Tension in Palestine had increased by the end of 1935. This was due to the proposition to create a legislative council projected by the British Government, which later gave up this idea under Jewish pressure. The Italian invasion of Abyssinia, which caused a general drop in British prestige, had serious economic repercussions in Palestine. There was a run on the banks, a general decline of economic activity and unemployment grew apace. Anti-British propaganda from the Italian radio station at Bari became increasingly more aggressive. Numerous nationalist demonstrations and strikes erupted

- * Between 1933 and 1937 one-third of the Jews who emigrated from Germany went to Palestine, another third overseas, and the rest to other European countries.
- † See the White Book of Lord Passfield of 1930 (Cmd. 3692). The principle of equal obligations towards Jews and Arabs in Palestine had a great influence on British policy from the beginning of the mandate régime (J. Marlowe, The Seat of Pilate. An Account of the Palestine Mandate, London, 1960, pp. 87–109).

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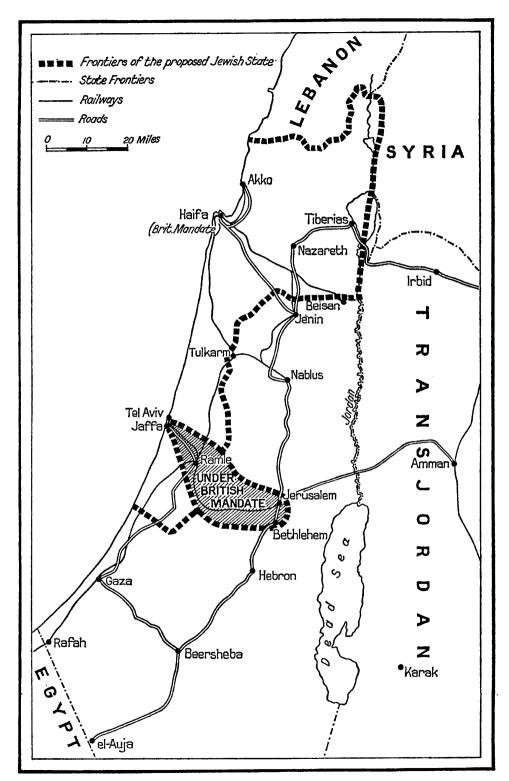
in the neighbouring countries. In March 1936 the British and the French Governments issued assurances that they would conclude treaties with Egypt and Syria recognising their independence. Thus the process of change in the order established after World War I both in Egypt and the countries of the Levant neighbouring on Palestine became evident.

Such was the internal and international background of the Arab revolt of April 1936. It was more serious than the previous protests of the Palestinian Arabs against British domination and Jewish colonisation, since it had the wider and more active support of the Arab population and lasted much longer than previous Arab rebellions, ending only after three years. It at first assumed the form of a prolonged Arab strike, with occasional attacks on Jews. The uprising was organised by the Arab Higher Committee, which arose out of a coalition of Arab parties and groups under the leadership of the Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Muhammed Amin el-Huseini. The committee demanded the cessation of Jewish immigration, prohibition of land purchase by Jews and the replacement of the Mandate Government by a responsible National Government. As in 1921 and 1929 after outbreaks of Arab discontent, the British Government sent a special commission to Palestine. It was a Royal Commission this time and its composition indicated that the British authorities attached great weight to the Palestine problem. This is one of the Empire's most difficult problems, Anthony Eden, then Foreign Secretary, was to say later to Ribbentrop.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION REPORT

The Commission* arrived in Palestine on November 11th, 1936. It heard the representatives of the Government, of the Jews as well as of the Arabs, who finally decided to lift their boycott on the commission. It made its report on July 7th, 1937. This is a basic document distinguished for its clarity and the objectivity of its analysis of the Palestine situation. The Commission proposed terminating the mandate and dividing Palestine into two parts: a Jewish state to embrace about one-fifth of the area and an Arab state composed of

* Composed of: Earl Peel, well-known Conservative politician and former Secretary on Indian Affairs (Chairman); Sir Horace Rumbold, diplomat, former Ambassador to Berlin; Sir Laurie Hammond, former Provincial Governor in India; Sir Maurice Carter, former Judge of the Kenya Supreme Court; Sir Harold Morris, former Presiding Justice, Court of Industrial Disputes; Professor Sir Reginald Coupland, historian and colonial administration expert. 'This was an exceptionally strong commission, composed of eminent personalities with great experience', wrote J. Marlowe, in *Rebellion in Palestine*, London, 1946, p. 173.



Palestine partition plan of 1937.

the rest and of Transjordan. A small, but very important, area was to remain under permanent British mandate. Some news of the Royal Commission's proposals leaked out to the public and became the subject of political rumours for many weeks before the report became official.

The Arab rebellion in Palestine and the Royal Commission report exerted an important influence on the country and the whole Arab East. It confirmed the solidarity of the Arab countries. As an Arab source declared:

It was during this revolt that the sympathy of the whole Arab world for the Arabs of Palestine first expressed itself fully. In the great towns of the Arab world, committees for the defence of Palestine were formed; money was subscribed and volunteers enlisted for the armed struggle. In the later period of the struggle it was indeed directed from Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. It served as a focus for all the political energy of the Arab world and did more than anything else to encourage the movement for unity. The most important Arab conferences held during that period (Bloudan, July 1937, and Cairo, November 1938) were convened with the explicit purpose of taking measures to deal with the Zionist danger.⁴

The Royal Commission report stepped up the political activity of the Arab states. The majority of the governments and the Arab parties opposed the partition plan. Although the leaders were most probably vacillating, public opinion dominated by nationalism left them little room for manoeuvre.* It appears that partition was at first accepted by a considerable section of the Arab Governments as well as by the conciliatory-minded party among the Palestinian Arabs. 5 When the Arab Higher Committee called upon the Arab Governments to oppose the partition plan they received positive reactions only from Iraq and Syria. The Egyptian premier, Nahhaspasha, refused to make any kind of declaration, while Abd Allah, Emir of Transjordan, Ibn Saud, King of Saudi Arabia, and Yahia, the Imam of Yemen, were evasive. Nevertheless, none of them, except Abd Allah, dared to support the partitition proposal. At the same time the Arab countries obtained Britain's recognition of the right to and official possibility of intervening in Palestine affairs. In 1939 they were officially invited to a special conference in London on the matter.

* Though given in another connection, that of the cession of Alexandretta to Turkey, the following opinion of the Afghan Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Italian envoy at Kabul, is of interest. 'The masses in the Arab countries', said the Minister, 'are undoubtedly nationalistic. The ruling classes basically favour the English, since they hope with their aid to retain their privileges which it would be difficult to retain otherwise. Many words and little concrete activity can be expected of them' (IDDI, Series 8, Vol. XII, Rome, 1952, no. 446).

Around that time important changes took place among the Palestine Jewish population. Just before the uprising, 400,000 Jews lived there, and enjoyed far-reaching autonomy, having their own central and local governing institutions, schools and social services. In that period their contacts with Arab society were limited, although economically essential.* These contacts were furthermore broken by the Arab strike, the rebellion and guerrilla struggle. But Jewish society managed to satisfy its needs, becoming much more independent and self-sufficient as a result. As we saw, it was the Royal Commission that proposed the creation of a Jewish state. Coming at a time of heightened persecution in Europe and the beginning of Jewish nationhood in Palestine, this proposition could not but have caused a strong political reaction from Jews both inside and outside Palestine. The majority in the Zionist movement expressed their readiness to accept the partition proposal, only insisting on certain territorial adjustments. However, some influential Zionist and non-Zionist circles expressed strong opposition to the plan for division of the country and the creation of a Jewish state. This opposition to a great degree paralysed the efforts of the pro-partitionist Jewish Agency Executive.

In relation to Palestine the British Government found itself in a difficult situation, full of contradictions and dangers. True, British imperial interests dictated the necessity of always maintaining good relations with the Arabs. But as long as none of the Great Powers questioned the status quo in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, the pressure of Arab politicians on the British Government could not be effective. That pressure would be counteracted by the internationally sanctioned position of the Jewish settlement in Palestine and by the influence the Jewish Agency had acquired in many countries. This element remained when the Axis powers began their expansion. But the British Government naturally had to be more conciliatory towards Arab demands, particularly to those which did not threaten British domination of Palestine. On the other hand, owing to the tense international situation, there could be no question of Britain resigning her rule over Palestine. It must be remembered that control over the northern hinterland of the Suez Canal by Great Britain occupied an important place in her plan to create a Jewish national home in Palestine. The development of aeronautics and aerial communications increased the weight of the above considerations. There was at the same time a growth of public criticism of concessions at the

^{*} The Jewish population was dependent particularly on the Arab provision of agricultural produce. Arab seasonal labourers on the citrus plantations played an important role. Two ports, Arab Jaffa and nationally mixed Haifa, were of great significance.

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expense of the Jews, particularly since the problem of Jewish emigration had become so acute. The result of these contradictory desires and obligations was represented first by the Royal Commission report and then by the extreme vacillation of British policy—from the extreme of accepting the proposition for the partition of Palestine to its complete rejection.

GERMAN INTERESTS IN PALESTINE

There is no doubt that the role played by Nazi Germany and her activity on the international arena created a favourable climate for the Arab uprising in Palestine. On the other hand, her rabid anti-Semitism strengthened the position of the Jews in that country contrary to Nazi aims. At the start of their rule the Hitlerites introduced a number of measures which facilitated the emigration of German Jews to Palestine. By agreement between the Jewish Agency and the Reich authorities* German Jews were allowed to take out part of their property in the form of goods produced in Germany. An organisation called *Haavara* (Hebrew for transfer), set up for the purpose, received a virtual monopoly on the import of German goods into Palestine. As a result of the agreement, German exports to Palestine increased from 11.4 million RM, in 1932 to 16.7 million in 1933 and 32.4 million in 1937. Expressed as a percentage, exports grew from 10 per cent in the years preceding the Nazis' advent to power to 16 per cent.† Over the same period exports from Palestine to Germany continued to fall. The agreement with Haavara was criticised in German governmental circles, who charged that it constituted the export of German goods without getting an equivalent in hard currency. But it was finally considered that the agreement was necessary to hasten Jewish emigration. Actually, the transfer of Jewish property within the framework of Haavara resulted in the bulk of Jewish belongings falling into the hands of the Third Reich. The 'loss of foreign currency' allegedly sustained by the German economy was most probably minimal, since the Haavara agreement

* This agreement was sharply criticised in many Jewish circles, since Jewish organisations declared a boycott on German goods in 1933.

[†] According to the data of the Reichsstelle für Devisenbewirtschaftung (Reich Foreign Exchange Control Office), in 1933–7 the transfer of Jewish capital from Germany to Palestine amounted to 70 million RM., 23 million of which fell to the Saar. According to Jewish Agency data, the import of Jewish capital to Palestine from Germany amounted in 1934–7 to £4 million sterling. From Poland the figure was 6·7 million (DGFP, Ser. D, Vol. V, Washington, 1953, no. 575, pp. 772–7). It is interesting that the Polish Government also explored the possibility of introducing measures similar to those of the Haavara agreement (Polish Foreign Office archives PIII W90 T1).

prohibited the export of goods produced from foreign raw materials or which involved other costs in foreign currency.

It is not known whether the Nazi Government reckoned that its anti-Jewish policy and increased emigration to Palestine would contribute to the Arab uprising. The Germans did not organise the uprising and there is no proof that they helped it at the beginning. The Italians, however, had shown an interest in the Arab countries for some time and probably maintained contact with the man who was emerging as the undoubted leader of the Palestinian Arabs— Haji Muhammed Amin el-Huseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem.* But there is no doubt that, like the Italians, the Germans, too, wanted to benefit from the Palestinian situation, in order to strike a blow at Britain's international prestige. The Palestine question was as if made to order for the needs and aims of Nazi propaganda. On the one hand, the persecution of the Jews in Germany and in other countries, where the native anti-Semites intensified their activity under the influence of the events in Germany, compelled the Jews to demand Palestinian visas and stimulated the efforts of the Zionists for larger immigration quotas. On the other hand, Nazi anti-Jewish propaganda coincided with the thesis of the Arab nationalists regarding the alleged control by 'international Jewry' over world finance and politics, and about the 'British-Jewish conspiracy' to take Palestine from its inhabitants.

True, until the spring of 1939 the Germans did not utilise radio broadcasts, the most effective propaganda medium in the Arab East. But they used other diverse methods: from supplying the Arab press with information bulletins and paid advertisements⁷ to personal contacts and encouraging trips to Germany and study there. It is sufficient to glance at the Arab press at that time to notice the propaganda angles and themes borrowed from the Nazis. In May 1937, for instance, on the occasion of the observance of Mohammed's birth, German and Italian flags were displayed as well as portraits of Hitler and Mussolini, although in 1935 the Arabs had demonstrated in many localities against the Italian aggression in Abyssinia.

Thus the growing influence of the Axis Powers could be felt in

^{*} England was seriously disturbed at the activity of Italian agents in the Arab lands. An agreement was reached between Great Britain and Italy on April 16th, 1938, in which Chamberlain promised to recognise Italian annexation of Abyssinia in return for the withdrawal of Italian troops from Spain and Libya and the cessation of anti-British propaganda in radio transmissions to Arab countries. The following note appears in a British memorandum regarding the implementation of this agreement: 'Had Italy been active as she was prior to the Anglo-Italian Agreement there can be little doubt that the Palestinian situation whould have been rendered much graver' (British Documents on Foreign Policy, 3rd Series, Vol. III, London, 1950, no. 326 of October 2nd, 1938).

Palestine before the Peel Commission report. It could also be noticed that the Germans and Italians made certain attempts to benefit from Britain's difficulties on the Jordan. The Peel report improved the opportunities of German diplomacy and facilitated the work of the fifth column in Palestine and other countries of the Arab East. For prior to that report, the Arabs had expected that the Palestine events and their effect on the whole Arab and Muslim world would compel the British to make far-reaching concessions to Arab demands. The Peel Commission proposals changed the situation: the Arab politicians now began to seek new ways to check the weakening of the Arab position in Palestine. This situation afforded Nazi Germany great possibilities. It was enough now to adopt a clear position against partition and to unleash a propaganda campaign. It must be recognised, however, that these favourable circumstances did not affect to any great degree the standpoint of the German Government.

The Germans had their interests in Palestine, the most important of which were the German colonies and settlements there. In 1937 about 2,000 'Aryan' Reichsdeutsche lived permanently in Palestine,* mainly in the so-called German colonies at Jerusalem, Jaffa and Haifa. as well as in the rural settlements Sarona, Wilhelma, Waldheim and Bethlehem. The majority were members of Tempel Gesellschaft, founded in Württemberg in 1861. Several hundred of the Germans were Lutherans and the smallest number were Catholics, mainly monks. They had their own churches and schools, which—in accordance with the prevailing custom—were utilised also by the local population, mainly Arabs. In 1937 the Palestinian Germans were completely under the influence of the local NSDAP organisations, which treated the German settlements as advance posts of the Third Reich. The permanent return to Germany was discouraged and the sale of land, especially to Jews, was prohibited. German landed property in Palestine amounted to 43 sq. km., 29 of which were constituted by their rural settlements, with 1.5 sq. km. in the abovementioned three cities and 12.5 sq. km. spread over thirteen Arab villages.

^{*} According to the reports of German Consul-General Döhle (Jerusalem, March 22nd, 1937—1520/373180-89), 2,500 Germans lived in Palestine. According to Jewish Agency data (*The Jewish Case before the Anglo-American Commission of Enquiry on Palestine*, Jerusalem, 1947, p. 329), there were 2,000 Germans. But this figure applies only to the period immediately preceding the outbreak of the war when many young Germans left for military service. Many of them served during the war in the O.K.W. special task regiment called 'Brandenburg'. According to H. D. Schmidt, *The Nazi Party in Palestine and the Levant*, International Affairs, 1952, pp. 460-9, there were 1,800 Germans in Palestine. This figure, though, applies to the 1920s.

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Relations between the German colonists and the Palestinian Jews were good before Hitler came to power. They then worsened with the passage of time. The German colonies and enterprises suffered much from the Jewish boycott and generally greeted the Arab rebellion with sympathy. For the Germans were convinced that the further growth of the Jewish community in Palestine would make their existence more difficult, and that a pro-Jewish solution of the Palestine question would compel them to leave the country. Some of them actually thought of leaving and bought land in neighbouring Arab countries and in Cyprus. 'It should be clear', wrote the Reich's Consul-General at Jerusalem, 'that with a completely pro-Jewish solution the German colonists would be compelled to emigrate and German institutions to close their gates.'9 After the Peel report the German colonists feared that their settlements, situated at the coastal lowlands and in Galilee, would fall within the borders of the Jewish state.

Following a policy of expelling the Jews, the Nazis did not consider for a long time the interests of the German colonists in Palestine. What is more, the agreement to transfer to Palestine part of the German Jews' property gave the Haavara Company a monopoly on the import of German goods. It is self-evident that Haavara sought to benefit Jewish institutions and enterprises and not the German colonists. Moreover, Arabs buying German goods were in a similar situation to the German colonists.

PORTENTS OF A TURN IN GERMAN POLICY

Up to mid-1937 neither her political perspectives and possible propaganda successes in Arab countries nor the interests of the German colonies in Palestine inclined Germany's leaders to take a political interest in Palestine affairs. Only with the news of the partition and creation of a Jewish state came the desire to take a new look at the question. For the plans of the Peel Commission showed that European, and in particular German anti-Semitism would have to face entirely unexpected consequences. The emergence of a Jewish state was precisely such an unexpected result. It can be gathered from available documents that it was this circumstance which inclined the German authorities to take new political decisions.

On June 1st, 1937, von Neurath, Germany's Minister for Foreign Affairs, sent special instructions to the London Embassy, to the Consulate-General in Jerusalem and to the Baghdad Legation. On the 22nd of the same month a circular letter was despatched by Auswärtiges Amt to all German posts abroad. Both documents dealt with the Palestine question. This was before the Peel report

was made, but they already commented on its basic idea—partition of Palestine and creation of a Jewish state.

Both documents declared that Germany's relation to Palestine affairs had hitherto rested on internal political premises. Thus, the first of the above-cited documents says:

Heretofore it was the primary goal of Germany's Jewish policy to promote the emigration of Jews from Germany as much as possible. In order to achieve this goal sacrifices are even being made in foreign exchange policy.¹² The document goes on: "The formation of a Jewish state or a Jewish-led political structure under British mandate is not in Germany's interest, since a Palestinian state would not absorb world Jewry, but would create an additional position of power under international law for international Jewry, somewhat like the Vatican state for political Catholicism or Moscow for the Comintern.'¹³

A further explanation of why Nazi Germany adopted a negative attitude to the plan to create a Jewish state is made by the circular letter of Auswärtiges Amt, when it states:

In reality . . . it is of greater interest to Germany to keep Jewry dispersed. For when no member of the Jewish race is settled on German soil any longer, the Jewish question will still not be solved for Germany. Rather, the developments of recent years have shown that international Jewry will of necessity always be the ideological and therefore political enemy of National Socialist Germany. The Jewish question is therefore at the same time one of the most important problems of German foreign policy.

Von Neurath's instructions further declare: 'Germany therefore has an interest in strengthening the Arab world as a counterweight against such a possible increase in power for world Jewry.'

In connection with this the German Foreign Minister directed the German Embassy in London (von Ribbentrop was then Ambassador) to inform the British Government of Germany's interest in the Palestine question and of her negative position on the creation of a Jewish state there. 'We do not believe that the effort to tranquillise the international situation would be aided by the formation of a Jewish state in Palestine.'

Fritz Grobba, envoy to Baghdad, received a directive to the effect that 'the German understanding of Arab national aspirations should be expressed more clearly than before, but without making any definite promises'. Moreover, all German missions were to make reports on their observations of any activity on behalf of a Jewish state.

Both von Neurath's instructions and the Auswärtiges Amt circular

letter contained the important reservation: 'It is not to be expected that direct German intervention would influence essentially the development of the Palestine question.'

It may be gathered from other documents, too, that Auswärtiges Amt did not believe in Germany's ability to prevent the implementation of Britain's Palestine plans. The question of the country's partition was at first considered as settled. On October 26th, 1937, von Neurath in a discussion with the British chargé d'affaires even raised the question of guarantees to the German colonies in Palestine in the event of partition being accomplished.¹⁴

The logical result of Germany's negative attitude to the creation of a Jewish state should have been to change her policy towards Jewish emigration to Palestine and to the transfer of Jewish capital from Germany. According to von Neurath's instructions of June 1st, decisions on these matters were to be made later on. The exchange of opinion in Auswärtiges Amt, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Reichsstelle für Devisenbewirtschaftung, the Reichsbank, Ministry of Economic Affairs and the National Socialist Party institutions (mainly in the offices of the Führer's deputy, in the Aussenpolitisches Amt and in the Auslandsorganisation) on the question of the further destiny of Jewish emigration had commenced, at the latest, by the beginning of 1937.15 Döhle, Consul-General at Jerusalem, demanded a radical change in policy. An elaborate report in which he outlined his reasons was forwarded to German diplomatic posts and central institutions. 16 By the beginning of 1938 Döhle still complained that no political or economic steps had been taken on the matters of Jewish emigration and the transfer of capital to Palestine. He moreover pointed out that as a result of the prevailing policy, the Arabs might react negatively to Germany.¹⁷ Furthermore, various officials of the Auslandsorganisation NSDAP and the Referat Deutschland of Auswärtiges Amt had expressed opposition to the existing policy.¹⁸

During July and August 1937 there were several conferences of representatives of interested agencies. A demand was advanced to halt Jewish emigration and the transfer of capital to Palestine. Von Neurath's instructions of June 1st were cited and it was remonstrated that a more important task than driving the Jews out of Germany was to maintain their state of dispersion. Advocates of this thesis were of the opinion that a Jewish state was being built as a result of Jewish immigration to Palestine with the help of German money and the knowledge and skill the Jews had acquired in Germany. ¹⁹ The alleged harm to the German economy from the transfer of capital was pointed out. The long-run economic and political effects of this state of affairs were strongly emphasised. The increasing emigration of German Jews, maintained some anti-emigration advocates, could

be accomplished not by means of official support and by enabling transfer of capital, but by 'encouraging the Jews' own urge to emigrate', that is, by more brutal persecution and curbing of rights.²⁰

But the opposition to the prohibition of emigration and capital transfer was just as strong. And this side also advanced serious arguments-of course, from the Nazi point of view. It was first of all maintained that if the Jews were not able to emigrate to Palestine, Hitler's order to make Germany Judenrein, i.e. for maximum emigration, would not be fulfilled.21 For, they argued, Palestine has been absorbing Jews of moderate means, the poverty-stricken and the youth, whereas the rich Jews have found asylum in the large cities: New York, London, Amsterdam, Johannesburg, etc. Besides, Jewish emigration to Palestine cost the Germans relatively little.²² The transfer of Jewish property to Palestine caused no special harm to Germany's economy, since that transfer was anyway being more and more limited, and the export of German goods under the Haavara even supplied employment to German workers. The fear was also expressed, mainly by circles of the Reich economic ministry, that the abolition of Haavara would revive the Jewish boycott on German goods.²³ Jewish emigration to Palestine, emphasised the opponents of its prohibition, is a lesser evil for Germany. 'I know from my own experience', wrote an official of Auswärtiges Amt, 'how unusually unpleasant the influx of Jewish intellectuals is for us.' He pointed out that the emigration of Jews to the United States, Turkey and Iran influenced intellectual life in the direction of strengthening anti-German feeling, and that Jewish immigrants in Latin America caused the Germans much economic, propagandistic and political harm. For the same alleged reasons, German port authorities and the NSDAP organisations in Latin America demanded the prohibition of Jewish emigration. But in Palestine, argued that official, the Jews are among themselves and cannot harm the Third Reich.²⁴ The opponents of prohibition maintained, besides, that Jewish immigration need not necessarily lead to the emergence of a Jewish state in Palestine, and that the stopping of emigration from Germany could not prevent it anyway, since it would result in increased emigration from Poland and Rumania. The Jews of these countries, in the opinion of von Hentig, then chief of Division Pol. VII (which was occupied with Near and Middle Eastern affairs), who after the war was the ambassador of the German Federal Republic to Djakarta, were more disposed to animosity towards the Germans and were not concerned with the considerations which restrained the German Jews from combating the Third Reich.25 The view was also advanced that by prohibiting emigration, and at the same time maintaining Germany's anti-Jewish policy, the Reich authorities would not know in general what to do with the Jews, whom they were turning into paupers and a burden on the Reich Government.²⁶

Reference was finally made to Hitler's decision to direct Jewish emigration to Palestine so as to more easily combat the Jews there.²⁷ There was perhaps no such formal and final decision,* since the questions of emigration and capital transfer had not ceased to be subjects of discussion even by 1938. But by that time the discussion of these questions was to a great extent devoid of substance, for the British authorities had dropped the partition plan and seriously limited Jewish immigration to Palestine. The German Government though, in certain cases, deigned to allow legal and illegal Jewish emigration to that country up to the first years of the war. Two tendencies of Nazi anti-Semitism were reflected in the above-cited discussion as well as in the whole practice of the Nazi régime before World War II. One was the tendency to drive the Jews out of Germany; the other to capitalise on the Jewish question in political machinations within Germany and the international arena. In this discussion was latent the germ of the eventual 'final solution' of the Jewish problem.

ARAB ENDEAVOURS TO GAIN GERMAN SUPPORT

It can easily be deduced that German opposition to the creation of a Jewish state in a partitioned Palestine, in distinction from the viewpoints of the other European Great Powers, was not connected with Middle Eastern questions. As follows from the above, in their considerations of the Palestine situation in 1937, and to a great extent in 1938, the Germans did not pay much attention to Arab aspirations. It seems that at the time the Germans—at least on an official level—had no precise political conception with regard to the Arab countries. The Aussenpolitisches Amt of the Nazi party attempted to maintain contact with the Arab countries, but the initiative of the APA was not supported at that time by the governmental organs.28 It is characteristic that in the discussion on prohibiting Jewish emigration to Palestine, the APA representatives advocated the stopping of emigration. The question of policy in the Arab countries was raised in an entirely different manner after Munich, but when the Peel proposals were definitely under consideration Arab affairs played a secondary part.

Nevertheless, this was a very important period in the development of German policy in the Arab East. For the Palestine partition plan

^{*} See the notes of Clodius (Berlin, January 27th, 1938—DGFP, Ser. D, Vol. V, no. 579, pp. 783-5), in which appears a hand-written minute by Weizsäcker: 'We should have this in writing. Another discussion would then be superfluous.'

afforded the Nazis new opportunities for activity, though on a modest scale at first. The partition plan and the German attitude to it created a certain platform for contacts.

On July 15th, 1937, Dr. Grobba, German envoy at Baghdad, met the then Premier of Iraq, Hikmet Suleiman, who expressed the hope that the Germans would do everything in their power to frustrate the plans of the Royal Commission. This step by a leader who was attacked for being cool to Arab unity was probably meant to prepare the ground for more concrete negotiations. For on the following day Grobba was visited by members of the Palestinian Arab Higher Committee: Awni-bey Abd el-Hadi and Muin el-Madhi. They urged that the Reich Government should interest itself in the Palestine question and support the Palestinian Arabs; while Abd el-Hadi expressed a desire to visit Berlin soon.*

Iraq's Premier wanted the Germans to support the fight against partition with an appropriate statement by one of the Reich leaders. What is more, he pointed out that Iraq could wage a successful struggle against the creation of a Jewish state if she were not subject to British financial pressure and that a loan by someone other than Great Britain would be a great help to Iraq.²⁹ For the Government of Hikmet Suleiman, which arose as a result of the military coup of Bekr Sidqi in 1936, represented—in contrast to the majority of Iraq governments—an anti-British trend. But that Government did not last long.

On July 16th Hajj Amin el-Huseini, Mufti of Jerusalem and Chairman of the Arab Higher Committee, visited the Reich Consul-General Döhle. This was probably the Mufti's first official contact with a Third Reich representative. Later this personage was to play the top role in realising the Nazi plans. The Mufti stressed his sympathy for 'new Germany' and expressed the hope that it would support the Arabs. He pictured such support as taking a position in the press or manifesting in some other manner public opposition to the Zionist aspirations in Palestine. He also requested the Germans to maintain contact with his confidential agent, who was to proceed to Berlin. At another time the Mufti asked for German intervention with the Polish Government to adopt a more favourable attitude to the aspirations of the Palestinian Arabs. For the Polish Government,

^{*} Awni-bey Abd el-Hadi visited Germany in 1939 after the London conference on Palestine. He was most probably the guest of A.P.A.

[†] Report of the German Vice-Consul Dittmann, Jerusalem, August 10th, 1937—DGFP, Vol. V, no. 572, pp. 766-8. The Mufti transmitted to Dittmann the view of the Arab Higher Committee that the Palestinian Arabs were seriously threatened by Poland. He stated that Dr. Weizmann, President of the Jewish Agency, was going to Warsaw to secure the Polish Government's support to the creation of the largest possible Jewish state in Palestine. Hajj Amin directed a

in the hope of increasing Jewish emigration, took a positive position on the Peel report. The Royal Commission plan was the subject of the Mufti's conversations with other powers including the United States.*

In September representatives of Syrian nationalists turned to the German Consul at Beirut, Seiler, with a request to provide arms and ammunition for the Arab rebellion in Palestine, which after an interval of several months was to break out with renewed force in order to thwart the country's partition.³¹ Seiler expected many similar requests from various directions in view of the resolutions of the all-Arab conference of the 'Committees to defend Palestine' held at Bloudan.³²

Still earlier, soon after the publication of the Peel report, Baghdad requested from Berlin that the Iraqi representative at the League of Nations should receive the aid and advice of the German Consul at Geneva during the League discussion of the Palestine partition plan. This Consul occupied himself with League of Nations affairs within the framework of Auswärtiges Amt.³³

On November 5th, 1937, a conversation took place at Baghdad between the German envoy Grobba and the personal secretary of the King of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Yusuf Yasin. The latter made it clear that his monarch expected Germany to take steps to prevent the formation of a Jewish state in Palestine.³⁴

In November and December 1937 Dr. Said Abd el-Fattah Imam, of the Arab Club in Damascus, visited Berlin. He represented the Mufti of Jerusalem and several Syrian nationalist organisations. Dr. Imam proposed to the German authorities a private understanding, according to which Germany would render 'ideological' support to his plenipotentiaries (by the expression of sympathy) and material aid (supplies for the Arab liberation movement to be repaid eventually), as well as in propaganda. In return Dr. Imam's superiors would undertake the task of promoting German trade in the Arab-Islamic world, of creating a friendly atmosphere towards Germany

* Wadsworth to the Secretary of State, Jerusalem, August 16th, 1937—FRUS, 1937, Vol. II, Washington, 1954, pp. 905–9. Already then the U.S. Government was under the pressure of the oil corporations, who demanded that it refrain from supporting the Zionist aims in Palestine (ibid., p. 893).

letter to the Polish Government to the effect that the absorbing power of a Jewish state would be small and would not be a factor in the solution of the Jewish question in Poland. He cited Poland's national struggle against partition and expressed the hope that the Poles would show an understanding of the Arab fight against parts of their country being torn away. The Zionists did try to get Polish diplomatic support; see Raczyński's political report and appendices, London, December 11th, 1936—Polish Foreign Office archives, PIII W 90 T2, and Gazeta Polska, July 16th, 1937.

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(this would be useful in the event of war), of disseminating national socialist ideology among the Arabs and Muslims generally, of combating Communism, of boycotting Jewish goods, of carrying on terrorist activity in the French possessions, of fighting against the formation of a Jewish state in Palestine, of spreading German culture and education, and—in case of victory of the Arab independence movement—of exclusively utilising German capital and technical aid.³⁵ As follows from the context, this understanding was to apply to Palestine, Syria and Lebanon.

At about the same time the nationalist Emir Adel Arslan, who then lived in Switzerland, made a bid for German support of the Palestine Arabs.³⁶

Thus, Arab leaders in Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Saudi Arabia expected an active German attitude on the Palestine question. They wanted, first of all, political support, either in the form of a statement by a top official or by a public stand against a Jewish state.³⁷ Auswärtiges Amt documents show no similar demands from Egypt.*

But the German Government was not inclined to pursue the course requested by the Arab leaders and preferred to act through secret channels. At the request of the Iraqi premier for a pertinent statement by a German Government leader, Auswärtiges Amt gave a negative answer, which it justified by the lack of a united Arab position on the Peel report. But it did agree that the Reich Geneva Consul should aid the Iraqi delegates to the League of Nations during the discussion of the Palestine question, though with the reservation that the co-operation should be kept secret.³⁸

GERMANY'S POLITICAL MOTIVES

How is one to explain this official Third Reich position in 1937–8? It would seem that both the desire for expansion in the lands reserved for the West and the Nazi anti-Jewish policy would have rather inclined Germany to make better use of the opportunities offered by the Palestine situation.

It may first of all be assumed that the Nazi régime did not feel strong enough for a showdown with Great Britain and France over its claim for colonies and *Lebensraum* in Europe and at the same time over markets and spheres of influence in the Mediterranean and elsewhere. For Germany's main goals at the time were in Europe.

* It is probable that in this matter Egyptian Government officials did not turn to representatives of the Third Reich; while the extremist opposition, such as Misr el-Fatat, presumably contacted the A.P.A. and not diplomatic representatives.

Hitler's position was that 'it is more advantageous to seek raw materials in Europe, among the Reich's immediate neighbours, and not overseas', and that 'the Empire (British) had its principal opponents among its competitors rather than in the conquered lands'.39 The Nazi assessment of Arab nationalism reflects this viewpoint. Only a few people in Auswärtiges Amt valued the possibilities of the Arab national movement highly. Reports came from German diplomatic posts and consulates round the world that the Arab Governments' interest in good relations with Great Britain had, to a great extent, paralysed their activity against the plans to partition Palestine. These reports pointed to the indifference with which the Palestine question was regarded in Lebanon⁴⁰ and Egypt.⁴¹ Germany's ruling circles also knew the position of Abd Allah, the Emir of Transjordan, who openly stated to a German correspondent (Schwartz von Berk) that he favoured partition. Because of the internal dissension dividing the Arab world, certain Arab leaders spread the view that the King of Saudi Arabia had completely sold out to the British and was ready to accept everything they proposed. Hence Auswärtiges Amt were not merely wriggling out of a clear answer when they resorted to the pretext of the lack of a united Arab position on the Peel report. It may be surmised that the opinion prevailed in Auswärtiges Amt that Arab opposition should not be taken seriously, and that with the exception of the Mufti of Jerusalem and the Iraqi Premier, Hikmet Suleiman, the Arab leaders had not adopted a decided position on the partition plan. It was considered that the decisive political circles in the Arab countries desired to avoid a serious conflict with Great Britain despite the prevailing aversion in the Arab world to the emergence of a Jewish state. Thus, von Hentig maintained that the Arabs 'are well aware that England considers the question important enough to impose her point of view by force of arms without restrictions'. 42 This viewpoint predominated, at least immediately after the publication of the Peel Commission report. And when the opposition of the Arab leaders became more definite many German officials did not hide their surprise.

The Arab Governments, although they at first apparently approved the British plan, began to change their position,⁴³ which they anyway did not openly profess for fear of public opinion. Their attitude was probably strongly influenced by the intransigence of Hajj Amin, who did not share the doubts of many Arab leaders who were reluctant to oppose Great Britain. Behind Hajj Amin were nongovernmental organisations set up in the majority of Arab countries for the purpose of supporting the Palestinian Arabs.

Certain German diplomats and politicians considered, too, that

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in the case of Asia and Africa it was necessary to take into account the safety of foreign citizens, and that the rising nationalism in the Arab lands, although directed at competing powers, might easily turn into hate of and excesses against foreigners generally. They furthermore feared that the political riots evoked by the nationalists would have a negative effect on German trade.⁴⁴

Be that as it may, the main cause of German restraint must be sought elsewhere. There is no doubt that German policy toward the partition of Palestine was primarily decided by Anglo-German relations.

Arguments of a general nature may be cited in support of this thesis. Hitler desired to obtain 'living space' in Europe and was interested in getting Britain to give him a free hand in Central and Eastern Europe—on more than one occasion he demanded this in conversations with representatives of the British Government. He must furthermore have known how sensitive British political circles were towards every attempt to disturb the status quo in the Mediterranean. For British statesmen often emphasised in official declarations the great significance they attached to that region. On November 5th, 1936, Anthony Eden, then Foreign Secretary, declared that 'freedom of communication in these waters [the Mediterranean Sea] is also a vital interest in the full sense of the word to the British Commonwealth of Nations'. 45 And he often in the future made reference to that statement. Indifferent to the fate of the Republican régime in Spain, the British Government was very much interested in everything relating to the sea and land borders of that state and in the trade routes along the coasts of the Iberian Peninsula.

Hitler assured Halifax in November 1937 that the only conflict between London and the Nazi régime was on the question of the former German colonies. But when he raised the question of eventually getting an equivalent for those colonies, he considered it necessary to state that 'at any rate Germany would not be satisfied with colonies either in the Sahara or along the Mediterranean Sea . . .'46 In the conversation with Henderson on March 3rd, 1938, Hitler again stressed that Germany did not interfere in the affairs of the British Empire.⁴⁷ Even in 1941 Rudolf Hess, in his approaches to British Government representatives, maintained that Hitler was ready to conclude peace with Britain on the condition that he received a free hand in Europe, and he offered in return the absolute désintéressement of Germany towards British spheres of influence.* Hitler's tactics consisted of lulling the vigilance of his potential adversaries, and from fear of British reaction he was cautious in his political

* At that time Hess made only one reservation, namely Iraq, where a pro-Fascist coup d'état took place in the spring of 1941 (see Chapters VI-VIII below). course in the Mediterranean area. Nor was it without significance that Nazi Germany had recognised from the outset of her *rapprochement* with Rome the Mediterranean as a centre of Italian interest. As Since Hitler considered that 'the chief enemies of the British Empire are its competitors rather than the conquered lands', he had to take into account all the more the viewpoint of Italy as a power entangled with Great Britain in the Mediterranean.

German intervention in the Spanish Civil War in 1936 would seem to contradict the above reasoning. But it must be recalled how Hitler by the end of 1937 understood the political meaning of German intervention in Spain. At the conference of November 5th, 1937 [the proceedings of which can be re-created on the basis of the famous Hossbach protocol], it was made clear that Hitler was by no means interested in a total Franco victory; he counted on the Spanish war dragging out and turning into an armed clash between England and France against Italy. For such a conflict could benefit the Germans by allowing them to solve the Austrian and Czechoslovakian problems in their own way, while active aid to the Palestinian Arabs could not yield similar results.

Nor did the other factors which propelled Nazi Germany into intervention in Spain have their counterparts in the Arab East situation. It is known that officially the Third Reich justified its intervention in Spain by the need to 'defend Europe from Bolshevism'. But it was hard to present the case of Palestine in the same light. Nor were the chances for getting control of raw materials the same in the Arab East as they were in Spain. In so far as the question of strategy is concerned, it was only during the Czechoslovak crisis that note was taken in Germany of the great strategic importance of air bases in Spain in case of a war with France.⁴⁹ The next occasion when the Germans became conscious of this problem was during their preparations to invade Poland.⁵⁰ At that time, too, the Nazi leaders directed their attention to the strategic importance of Turkey's southern neighbours.

THE COURSE TAKEN BY GERMANY

Germany therefore considered that active help to Arab nationalists, particularly in Palestine, would only lead to increased tension in relations with Great Britain. She therefore adopted a rather temperate attitude on the question. Her aid was very modest and she demanded that her partners keep it a secret out of fear that the British might learn of it. Such discretion was, moreover, in the interests of both Germany and her Arab partners.

As mentioned above, the co-operation between the Iraqi delegates

to the League of Nations and the German Consul at Geneva during the discussion of the Palestine question was to be kept secret. In reality, von Neurath's instruction to support the Arab nationalists was an empty gesture, since the German Government declined to send arms to the Palestine rebels. When the decision was taken on August 8th, 1937, to renew the export of arms from Germany, Auswärtiges Amt refrained from supporting the export of arms to the Palestine rebels even for cash.⁵¹ But the view gradually crystallised that this was a temporary decision. As can be gathered from numerous data, the German fifth column did not interrupt but strengthened its activity. But with Anglo-German relations in mind, the German authorities did not agree to extend the arms supply and definitely refused to deliver any via routes where strict secrecy could not be ensured. Directives on this matter were sent to London, Jerusalem and Baghdad, warning the agents to avoid all contacts which did not assure complete secrecy in sending arms to the Palestinian rebels. The German colonists in Palestine were also restrained from extending greater aid to the rebellion, although they continued to contribute money and assisted the guerillas technically.52

Moreover, the fear of causing a conflict with Great Britain in the Arab countries was evident not only in relation to the Palestine affair. When the question arose of supplying arms to Iraq, Auswärtiges Amt voiced a number of reservations to that kind of a deal, including, among other things, the reason that it did not wish to worsen Anglo-German relations.⁵³ When the question arose of providing Iraq with a loan floated by German banks, the Dresdner Bank—the foremost to be considered—did not want to participate, owing to the opposition of the British bank, Baring Bros., which was negotiating the matter.⁵⁴ Auswärtiges Amt supported the view of the German bank, since it considered that a clash with England because of the proposed loan, or because of other economic transactions with Iraq, was undesirable for political reasons.⁵⁵ German capitalists and the Government adopted a similar attitude on the matter of certain transactions with Egypt. 56 Auswärtiges Amt considered that it was more important to entangle Britain with Italy than for Germany to penetrate Iraq. Because of the difficulties it might effect in relations with Britain, the sale of arms to Iraq should be referred to Italy, was the advice of a memorandum of May 1937.57 That the Germans would thus attain the same political results, but without incurring any danger, is emphasised in another note of the end of July 1937.58 It should be recalled that several months later, on November 5th, 1937, Hitler was to formulate in a similar way Germany's central aim in Spain as a desire to entangle other European powers in war.

Nevertheless, Auswärtiges Amt considered the possibility of taking common action with Italy in the direction of supporting Arab aspirations. For Italy also opposed the plan for Palestine's partition and the formation of a Jewish state. She was not guided by anti-Semitic considerations, but by the fear that partition would strengthen Britain's position. The Mussolini régime anticipated that a Jewish state would become a strongpoint of support for England in the Mediterranean, which the Italians desired to turn into their sphere of influence.

Two reservations were advanced against co-operation with Italy, which Auswärtiges Amt considered decisive. It was maintained that a joint action would serve solely the interests of Italy, for it would strengthen her position in the Mediterranean and bring no benefits to Germany. Secondly, it was pointed out that it would offend Great Britain, who was seriously disturbed over Italian expansion in that region. The question of Palestine, Auswärtiges Amt suggested, could play a certain role in three-cornered German-Italian-British talks in compliance with German interests. But the talks never materialised. It is known that in 1938 England and Italy attempted to solve their Mediterranean and Red Sea disputes. But these were bilateral attempts.

Through diplomatic channels Germany could have influenced Poland and Rumania to refrain from supporting the plans of the Royal Commission at the League of Nations. She might also have counteracted Jewish efforts among foreign powers.⁵⁹ But even this proposal met with opposition.

There was still the question of German radio propaganda to the Arab East. This question in particular was raised by Dr. Imam at Berlin. German diplomatic and consular posts expressed the opinion that this type of propaganda would be desirable. But from the beginning the view triumphed that there should be no Arabic broadcasts from Germany, owing to the strong Italo-British controversy in which such broadcasts from the Bari station played an important role. The report of Division Pol VII was in favour of launching such broadcasts, but the Auswärtiges Amt leadership rejected the proposal.* In this case, too, considerations of relations with England frustrated German activity. Only in 1939 did Berlin start radio broadcasts, for the Nazis paid increasingly less attention to appearances after Munich, and pressed increasingly clearly to war.

To sum up—the following factors played a decisive role in Third

^{*} Von Hentig's note to Weizsäcker and von Bismarck, Berlin, March 9th, 1938—K868/K220386-7. But at that time the Propaganda Ministry took preliminary steps to start broadcasting in Arabic (Note of March 14th, 1938—K868/K220552).

NAZI GERMANY AND THE PEEL COMMISSION PLAN

Reich policy on Palestinian affairs in 1937-8. On the one hand there was anti-Semitism; and on the other considerations of relations with Great Britain. Arab affairs were of secondary importance to the Nazis, although at the same time they wished to maintain co-operation with the Arabs, in complete secrecy in the interests of both sides. In general, Arab demands from Germany did not go beyond the question of the partition of Palestine. Thus, Arab politicians hardly ever raised the question of Jewish emigration from Germany.* It was far from typical when the newspaper al-Jamia al-Islamiyya of January 9th, 1938, actuated by a certain dissatisfaction at the limitation of the export of Palestine citrus fruit to Germany and the low prices, wrote: 'Many Arabs consider that Germany is a friend of the Arabs. This friendship is perhaps the result of the German hatred of Jews. Germany's anti-Jewish policy has caused a strong outflow of emigrants to Palestine—German Jews. This is the good that Germany did us.'

Soon after the Munich conference, when the ruling circles of the Arab countries had come to understand the gravity of the Anglo-German conflict, the Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tawfik es-Suweidi, stated to German envoy Grobba that Germany's measures against the Jews affected the situation of the Palestinian Arabs unfavourably.†

In 1937 and 1938 those at the helm in Germany did not take into account the benefits of co-operation with the Arab nationalists. And influential Arab circles—perhaps with the exception of the Palestinian Huseini clan—were not inclined to tie themselves firmly to Britain's opponents, since they regarded England as the world's strongest power. However, the contacts established in 1937 and 1938, as a result of the threat of Palestine's partition, were a good beginning for German further activities.

* In his report of January 14th, 1938—DGFP, Vol. V, no. 577, pp. 780-1, German Consul-General Döhle wrote that if the Arab leaders would raise the question of Jewish emigration from Germany the relation of the Arab population to the Third Reich would undergo a radical change.

† Grobba's report, Baghdad, November 16th, 1938—1541/375500-2. Tawfik es-Suweidi had in mind the events in the autumn of 1938 when the Nazis organised pogroms against the Jews, burned down synagogues, robbed and sacked Jewish stores (the so-called Kristallnacht) and perpetrated other terrorist outrages, such as the mass deportation of Polish Jews living in Germany.

III

REPERCUSSIONS OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK CRISIS AND UNDERSTANDING WITH TURKEY



INCREASED TENSION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
AND THE SITUATION IN THE ARAB EAST

HE factors which induced the leaders of the Third Reich to follow a policy of restraint towards the Arab countries weakened or disappeared with the increased tension of the international situation. By the summer of 1938 the Germans had begun to prepare arms shipments to Palestine by way of Iraq and Saudi Arabia with the agreement of their Governments.* And it appears that they also had begun to finance the Palestine rebels.¹ At the same time the question of supplying arms to Egypt led to the strengthening of contacts between the Germans and anti-British military and court circles.† After Munich there was a definite change in the behaviour of the German colonies in Palestine: the NSDAP organisation concentrated on carrying on illegal activity and actually aided Arab guerilla bands.²

At the same time the Western Allies, who had suffered a serious defeat in Europe, were determined to strengthen their position in the Arab East. Great Britain was set to crush the Arab rebellion in

* Von Hentig's notes, Berlin February 28th, 1939—1605 H/385511; see also E. Dekel, SHAI, *The Exploits of the Hagana Intelligence*, New York, 1959, pp. 231-6. Dekel has published a number of documents from the archives of the Palestine police relating to the smuggling of arms from Germany. The earliest of the documents is dated September 17th, 1938.

† See the collection *Handel mit Kriegsgerät Ägypten*, DZA, Potsdam, AA 68425. In August 1938 Aziz Ali el-Masri, Inspector-General of the Egyptian armed forces (called 'Architect' in German documents), and Abbas Halim, an airman in Germany in World War I, visited Germany and carried on negotiations during the Premiership of Hasan Sabri-pasha.

Palestine while ready to make considerable concessions to the Arabs. Although it had expressed some willingness in 1936 to change the status of the countries of the Levant to that of independent states tied to France by treaty, the Paris Government now abandoned this position. France at first put off ratification of the new treaties and compelled the Syrian Government in November 1938 to approve a number of changes favouring the mandatory power. In May 1939, however, the Paris Government advanced new propositions indicating that France did not desire—at least at the time—to relinquish her direct control of the Levant countries. There was strong opposition in France from the beginning, especially from Right-wing groupings, to the treaties with Syria and Lebanon. The fact that these groups managed to win over many former supporters of the treaties is explicable by the worsening of the international situation and the consequent growing reluctance of the Government and public opinion to accept any changes which might result in weakening French authority in dependent countries.

The Sanjak of Alexandretta affair was linked to the question of the treaties. The Sanjak was part of the French mandated territories, but it enjoyed a semi-autonomous status owing to the large proportion of Turks. When the question arose in 1936 of treaties with the Levant countries the Turkish Government wanted additional guarantees for the Sanjak's Turkish population, claiming that it constituted a majority. On November 29th, 1937, a new régime was established in the Sanjak which maintained its link with Syria only in the spheres of customs, currency and foreign affairs. By agreement with France, Turkish troops entered the Sanjak on July 5th, 1938. An election was then held and the Sanjak was annexed to Turkey the following year.

France and England agreed to the cession of the Sanjak to Turkey, though it was contrary to the letter and spirit of the mandate, because they considered Turkey's aid to be indispensable to them. And on July 4th, 1938—on the eve of the entry of Turkish troops into the Sanjak—a Franco-Turkish treaty of friendship was initialled at Ankara. A declaration of mutual aid was then signed in Paris on June 23rd, 1939, analogous to the Anglo-Turkish declaration of May 12th 1939. Agreement on the Sanjak annexation was the condition for the signing of this declaration.³ As could be expected, cession of the Sanjak met with sharp protests from Syrian nationalists and the Governments of Iraq, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Italy and Germany, against whom this measure was directed, protested, too. But nothing could prevent the annexation of the Hatay, as the Sanjak was now renamed by Turkey.

Because of the worsening of the international situation, England

and France considerably strengthened their military forces in the Near and Middle East, particularly in Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Lebanon, thus reducing the possibility of anti-British actions. If the Axis political offensive resulted in concessions to the Palestinian Arabs, it had unfavourable effects, from an Arab viewpoint, in other countries.

Nor could Germany derive much satisfaction from the development of the internal political situations in the Arab countries. A change of government took place in Egypt early in 1939—Husein Sirri-pasha replaced Hasan Sabri-pasha as minister of War. Whereas the latter regarded the placing of military and Government orders with Germany favourably, the former opposed German economic penetration.⁴ The stronger the fear of the outbreak of war, the greater became the influence of Great Britain. This was the case particularly with Egypt, where the Italian threat* had been strongly felt since the attack on Abyssinia.

In Palestine it became even more noticeable that the people had grown tired of the long-lasting uprising, and the Huseini clan had to resort to increasing its use of terror against its Arab opponents. The danger of the partition of Palestine was averted, since the British Government abandoned the Peel Commission recommendations in 1938.5 The British Government accepted the conclusion of the Woodhead Commission that the Peel plans were technically unworkable⁶ (September 11th, 1938) and announced a tri-partite British-Arab-Jewish round table to be held in London.⁷ This encouraged the Nashashibi clan—the Huseini opponents in Palestine—who favoured co-operation with Great Britain.8 When the London conference (February 2nd-March 17th, 1939) proved a failure Great Britain published a White Paper⁹ on May 17th, 1939. This document promised to stop Jewish immigration after five years, to limit the purchase of land by Jews and to form a Palestinian state within ten years.

In the Levant, the Lebanese and Syrian Christian press opposed Germany during the September 1938 crisis. The Muslim press was silent, but the annexation of Sudetenland aroused apprehension in some Arab circles. If the will of a minority with a strong protector could be made to prevail in Europe, it was reasoned, then the same could come to pass in the Arab world. And the Arab East did not lack minority problems: the Jews in Palestine, the Kurds in Syria and Iraq, the Turks in Alexandretta, and so on. German representatives complained that Hitler's 'race ladder', on which the Arabs were

^{*} Ow-Wachendorf's letters, Cairo February 18th, 1939—Krieggerät Ägypten, DZA Potsdam, AA 68425. On November 4th 1937, Ow-Wachendorf wrote: 'The Egyptian is to a great extent satisfied with the alliance' (with England). Ibid.

placed on one of the lowest rungs, made an unfavourable impression in the Near East.¹⁰ And Hitler even proposed to omit his racial-ladder theory from the forthcoming Arab translation of *Mein Kampf*.¹¹

A change of attitude could also be felt in Iraq, where the APA established strong contacts with a number of leading personalities and where Arab nationalist groups with Fascist ideology were active. ¹² In October 1938 Tawfik es-Suweidi, Iraq's Foreign Minister, went to London. The trip played an important role in preparing the London round-table on the Palestine question. Before leaving, es-Suweidi gave an interview to the periodical *Great Britain and the East* in which he pointed to Iraq's great interest in the Palestine question and emphasised that Iraq was an ally of Great Britain, ready to come to her aid when necessary. 'As a matter of fact', he declared, 'we were quite prepared to play our part had the necessity arisen recently, and to implement our word.'¹³

This statement was in contradiction to the assurance given by Iraqi Premier Jamil el-Midfai to the German envoy Grobba on September 28th, 1938, i.e. when the tension in Europe was at a high point. The Iraqi Premier declared then that Iraq would probably be neutral in a war between Germany and England, and because of her sympathy with Germany, would use every opportunity afforded by her treaty with Great Britain to delay taking any measures against the Reich.

It is quite possible that Dr. Grobba took that assurance seriously, but it is doubtful that Auswärtiges Amt did so. Iraq was tied to Great Britain by a treaty of friendship and mutual assistance which obliged her Government to extend to her partner any aid she desired. England possessed air bases at Habbaniya and Shuaiba and she could exert an indirect influence on Iraqi policy through individuals faithful to her. It was unlikely at the end of 1938 that the Iraqi Government would dare openly to oppose Britain in the event of war; it might at most attempt to make its obligations less burdensome.

Nevertheless, Grobba requested an explanation after the publication of Tawfik es-Suweidi's statement. Before the Minister's return members of the Government were non-committal. Upon his return es-Suweidi put the matter to Grobba somewhat as follows: Iraq valued cooperation with Germany on the Palestine question very highly, but such co-operation naturally had to be limited whenever England considered it contrary to her interests. As an ally of Britain, Iraq in the event of war would have to do substantially what the British advised. But es-Suweidi considered it quite likely that the advice would be to maintain neutrality. Ye speaking of neutrality he may have wanted to soften the impression such a declaration was bound

to make on the German envoy, but it is probable that he himself hoped that England would agree to Iraq's neutrality. Nevertheless, es-Suweidi could hardly entertain any doubt that the British would, in case of war, insist on Iraq's breaking diplomatic relations with England's enemies in order to prevent political infiltration and espionage in the area of transit of British troops from India to Palestine and Egypt.

Germany for her part was interested in the neutrality of countries linked with England situated deep in the rear of the eventual fronts. This would play a certain role in the character of political prestige besides serving as a supporting base for future espionage and diversive activity in the enemies' rear. The German centres at Lisbon, Kabul and Bangkok during World War II are good examples of such designs.

GERMANY AND SAUDI ARABIA

When the possibility was explored on the eve of the Munich Conference of establishing some point of war support in the Arab East it was clear in Berlin that the existing diplomatic posts at Baghdad and Cairo, not to speak of the vulnerable Consulates-General at Jerusalem and Beirut, were not suitable. Saudi Arabia was the only formally independent Arab state not linked to England by treaty. True, the Yemen was also free of treaty obligations to Great Britain, but Italy was interested in that country and the Imam was averse to establishing relations with Germany.* There were no British bases in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, because Islam's holy cities, Mecca and Medina, were located there, it could be assumed that King Ibn Saud would regard a policy of neutrality in an eventual conflict as most suitable for the country and that he would be able to make that view prevail.

But perhaps the situation was most decisively affected by the success of the contacts made with Germany by Ibn Saud's representatives in 1937 on the Palestine question. Dissatisfied with the quantity and quality of arms supplied by Great Britain, 15 the Saudi ruler became interested in purchasing arms from Germany, and then expressed his readiness to establish diplomatic relations with her.

During his stay in Baghdad (in November 1937) Sheikh Yusuf Yasin—the King's private secretary—and other confidential agents enquired from representatives of the Otto Wolff firm if they would supply the King with 15,000 rifles on credit or for cash. ¹⁶ In the same year another representative of Ibn Saud, his personal physician,

* Relations between German arms firms and their Yemen customers did not develop satisfactorily (Kriegsgerät Yemen, DZA Potsdam, AA 68470).

Sheikh Madhat al-Ard (a Syrian from Damascus), contacted the Aussenpolitisches Amt of the NSDAP in the King's name. The Germans approached these contacts with great caution. It was pointed out, even by the APA, which was most strongly inclined to a more active approach to Arab affairs, that Germany could not reveal her admiration for the King, although she did want to develop economic relations with Saudi Arabia and was prepared to greet the representatives of Ibn Saud at the party rally in Nuremberg.¹⁷ It is possible, of course, that this cautious attitude was imposed on the APA by the adverse position taken up by Auswärtiges Amt regarding the various arms deals in the Near East proposed by Rosenberg's office.¹⁸

It may also be that the Germans wished to avoid taking any steps which might raise the prestige of Ibn Saud, who on the question of Palestine sometimes sought to appear as the leader of the Arab world. For support to Ibn Saud might be tantamount to an involvement in internal Arab rivalries, since political leaders of other Arab countries, particularly in Iraq, had warned the Germans against Ibn Saud. They charged him with servility to Britain and readiness to carry out all her orders.¹⁹ They even maintained that the Saudi King's opposition to the formation of a Jewish state in Palestine was insincere.²⁰ Furthermore, in accordance with their entire policy towards the Arab countries, the German Government acted with restraint to Ibn Saud's emissaries. They probably did not want their contacts with that far-off country on the Arabian Peninsula to become an additional factor, worsening relations with Great Britain and arousing Italian suspicions.

Early in 1938 Khalid al-Hud al-Qargani, adviser to the King (a Tripolitanian), visited Germany. This was not his first trip for his monarch with the aim of buying arms. He had visited Warsaw for that purpose²¹ early in the '30s. In Berlin, al-Hud, with APA as intermediary, conducted general negotiations with German firms. He proposed to buy rifles, place orders for building a cartridge factory and for automobiles. He relayed his monarch's wish to engage German engineers and specialists for road-building. Al-Hud obtained some promises for the supply of arms, which were still unfulfilled in the summer of 193822 when a new representative of Ibn Saud, then the Saudi Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Fuadbey Hamza (a Lebanese Druze), came to Berlin. He stayed there about a month (July 23rd-August 27th, 1938)²³ and raised many questions. The Germans concluded that the King of Saudi Arabia was interested in establishing diplomatic relations and desired an official German representation²⁴ in his country. This proved to be correct.

Fuad-bey Hamza presented to the Germans a fairly truthful picture of his country's situation. He stressed his ruler's limited freedom of action, particularly in relation to England. He maintained that his monarch could not afford to be drawn into a conflict with Great Britain, and that Saudi Arabia would be compelled to cooperate with Britain under certain circumstances. He further clarified the question of Saudi-Italian relations: although there had been some improvement and the King counted on receiving arms from Italy, the lack of confidence in that country had still not been overcome. Fuad-bey also indicated the hopes his King attached to Germany as a state without any imperialist interests in the Arab world.²⁵

He also discussed a number of practical questions with the Germans. Agreement was reached with OKW on the provision of arms to Saudi Arabia and via that country to the Palestinian rebels, ²⁶ for whom he was given a certain sum of money. ²⁷ But it seems that this money never reached its destination.

During Fuad Hamza's visit Germany made no decision on the sale of arms or on accrediting diplomatic representation to Jidda.* It was still uncertain whether Saudi Arabia would really remain neutral in the event of war. Otherwise, of course, the supply of arms on credit would not be justified from the German viewpoint.²⁸ In the opinion of OKW the supply of arms to Ibn Saud would not strengthen Germany's position, but might on the contrary be turned against her. Nor would this be a satisfactory transaction from a commercial viewpoint.²⁹ Besides, it was feared in Berlin that Ibn Saud wanted closer relations with Germany in order to serve his game of playing the British and Italians off against each other.³⁰

Ibn Saud's endeavours, however, compelled the German Government to arrive at a decision, for they were afraid that by ignoring him they would throw Saudi Arabia into the camp of Germany's enemies.³¹ Party officials, particularly of the APA, continued to press for energetic action in Arab affairs.³² When the Nazis pushed the world to the brink of war in September 1938 with their demands on Czechoslovakia, the APA demanded with special insistence a decision on relations with Saudi Arabia.† It was decided then not to conclude any agreement on credit transactions for provision of arms,³³ but to establish diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia so that in case of war 'our Baghdad envoy could withdraw to a neutral country'.³⁴ In

* Diplomatic representatives to Saudi Arabia lived at Jidda and not in the capital, Riyadh, where the presence of infidels was undesirable.

† Woermann wrote on September 29th, 1938, to Malletke of Abteilung Aussenhandel, Reichsführung NSDAP (DGFP, Vol. V, p. 793): 'I thank you very sincerely for your friendly suggestion of September 26, which actually caused us to consider the Saudi Arabian matter very thoroughly, even during these last days of crisis.' Could it be irony?

REPERCUSSIONS OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK CRISIS

September 1938 Auswärtiges Amt informed the Egyptian and Iraqi envoys that even if their Governments were compelled to sever diplomatic relations with Germany under British pressure, and to take measures against German citizens, the Reich Government would not retaliate.³⁵

The decision to establish diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia was probably taken only because Auswärtiges Amt saw no other possibility of maintaining a legal German supporting base in the event of war. This decision was at first of small significance, since there is evidence that the Germans still had little confidence in Ibn Saud. They were informed, for instance, that Fuad-bey Hamza was a paid British agent.* In this connection, two transports prepared for the Palestinian rebels were held up: one of them was to be shipped via Saudi Arabia and the other by an agreement with the Iraqi Government.³⁶ It turned out that the British somehow got to know about these transports. This aroused a lack of confidence on the part of the German authorities toward the King and his emissaries.†

GROBBA'S TRIP TO JIDDA

In January 1939 the German Government proceeded to implement the decision to establish diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia. On the 17th of that month Grobba flew to Jidda by way of Cairo. From then on he was to serve as the German envoy also accredited to Jidda.

For the Saudis the question of diplomatic relations with Germany was one of importance. A very small diplomatic corps was accredited to Saudi Arabia: only three diplomats functioned permanently in Jidda. They were: the British envoy (at that time Reader Bullard, who was later Ambassador to Tehran), the French and the Italian envoy (Silitti). Holland, Turkey, and Iraq maintained permanent chargés d'affaires. The Egyptian envoy was also accredited to Baghdad and the Afghan envoy to Cairo. Much of the activity of these diplomatic representatives was concerned with the Muslim hujjaj (pilgrims) on the way to Mecca and Medina—these envoys and chargés d'affaires represented either Muslim states or empires with

* D. C. Watt expresses the supposition that the competition between Yasin, Qarqani and Hamza was at the root of this information (*Royal Central Asian Journal*, April 1963, p. 157).

† Britain's Ambassador to Baghdad asked the Premier, el-Midfai, about those transports (Hentig's notes, Berlin, February 23rd, 1939—Kriegsgerät Yemen, DZA Potsdam, AA 68470). In the note of February 18th, 1939, von Hentig wrote: '... the transport plans were betrayed—it is not established if that was done by Ibn Saud, and they had to be abandoned' (loc. cit.; see also Hentig's notes, Berlin, February 28th, 1939—DGFP, ibid., p. 811).

Muslim subjects. The main political role was played by the British envoy, although Britain possessed other, more direct means of influencing Ibn Saud's court. Because of the growth of Italy's influence over the Red Sea, her representatives also assumed political importance. It may be assumed that England, who had already in the nineteenth century prohibited the states on the eastern and southern shores of the Arabian Peninsula in her treaties with them from maintaining their own diplomatic relations, was concerned also to limit Ibn Saud's contacts with the outside world. Germany was the first state without an interest in pilgrimages to the Muslim holy shrines to name an envoy to the Saudi Arabian King.

In connection with the expansion of the operations of the American oil corporation, the question of diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and the U.S.A. came to the fore. This was first put forward by the oil consortium which had concessions there, but the State Department did not support the proposition. In the middle of 1939 the U.S. Government decided to send an envoy to Saudi Arabia. At the time Caltex, the interested consortium, got a definite concession to extract oil there, the number of Americans considerably increased and other countries began to display a lively interest in Saudi oil. Ibn Saud expected that diplomatic relations with Germany and the United States would enable him to counterbalance British influence to some extent. ³⁷ Having begun to play an important role in connection with Palestine, the King clearly attempted to expand his international contacts.

In Jidda Dr. Grobba held conversations with members of the Diplomatic Corps, beginning with Italian envoy Silitti.³⁸ Between February 12th and 18th he had two audiences with the King and three with Sheikh Yusuf Yasin.³⁹

As a result of these conversations, Saudi Arabia expected from Germany moral, technical and material support, mainly in the form of arms deliveries. Ibn Saud also considered it essential that the Germans support the Arabs on the Palestine question. He proposed a permanent treaty of friendship with Germany and a trade agreement for a limited period. He asked, too, for German diplomatic support of some Saudi territorial claims (Aqaba and Najran) upon other Arab states.

Much attention was devoted in the conversations to Italian policy. The Saudi side did not conceal its lack of confidence in Italy and its dissatisfaction with the Anglo-Italian agreement on the areas on the shores of the Red Sea, among other things. Ibn Saud evidently considered that the agreement limited his own possibilities of political manoeuvre. It should be recalled that the Saudi King protested sharply against the conclusion of that agreement and that he issued

a statement challenging its validity after its ratification. It well may be that he even feared the direct division of the countries bordering on the Red Sea and therefore turned to the stratagem of establishing relations with Germany. Saudi politicians made it clear to Grobba that if confronted with the choice, Britain or Italy, the Arabs would favour the former. The Arab leaders were to reiterate this many times in their future contacts with Germany.

In return for German political and material support the King and his advisers promised neutrality in the anticipated war. They referred to Saudi Arabia's policy on the Abyssinian conflict: despite British pressure, the King did not apply sanctions against Italy and even sold her food, sheep and camels. Ibn Saud was among the first to recognise Italy's annexation of Ethiopia.* In return, the Italians sold Ibn Saud arms on favourable terms, made him a present of several aeroplanes, trained some Saudi pilots at their own expense and provided Saudi Arabia with a free mission of flight instructors. It should be pointed out that in February 1939 this mission was withdrawn at the desire of the King. Moreover, in his conversations with Grobba the King and his advisers emphasised the need for discretion in relations with Great Britain.

Grobba was in general favourably impressed by his visit to Jidda. He concluded that Ibn Saud could not be a friend of and willing tool for Great Britain. The King, in his opinion, hated the English, but had to pretend to be their friend. Having previously stressed the importance of the Arab countries and of Arab nationalism to German policy, Grobba now intensified his efforts to activate Germany in Arab affairs.

From his talks with Ibn Saud and other Arab leaders Grobba was convinced that the Germans had greater opportunities in Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries than did Italy, which the Arabs considered to be weaker than England. Besides, the Arabs feared Italian attempts at colonisation. In his report, Grobba referred to the viewpoint of Italian envoy Silitti that the Germans had greater opportunities in Saudi Arabia than Italy.

Grobba was also able to acquaint himself in Iraq with the relations of Arab politicians to Italy, particularly in the period after Munich. In November 1938 the ex-Premier of Iraq, Hikmet Suleiman, turned to Grobba with a plan for a pro-German and pro-Turkish *coup* in that country.† Such a *coup*, in the opinion of this traditionally anti-

^{*} In March 1937 the new Italian envoy was received by Ibn Saud as representative of the King of Italy and Emperor of Ethiopia, but he explicitly recognised the annexation in his note of November 22nd, 1938.

[†] It is uncertain therefore whether the accusation by Nuri Said of March 6th, 1939, that Hikmet Suleiman and others organised a conspiracy against the Iraqi

British and pro-Turkish politician, was possible only if Turkey were given guarantees against Italian expansion. For the fear of such expansion inclined Turkey to maintain friendly relations with Britain and France. Hence, if Germany were to influence a change in Italian policy, she could, in Hikmet Suleiman's opinion, count on having successful effects in Iraq as well. In February 1939 the Iraqi deputy Foreign Minister, Rustum Haidar (a Shii from Syria), in a conversation with Grobba, criticised the line the German press took towards Italy and her policies. We are of the impression, emphasised Haidar, that Germany supports Italian policy in the Mediterranean and does not reckon with Arab aspirations. The Iraqi Government, he maintained, is not interested in the destinies of Tunisia or of Italy's colonies in North Africa, but it is not indifferent to the fate of Syria and Palestine.⁴⁰

Similar portents came from Egypt. In November 1938 the German envoy at Cairo pointed out that Egypt's neutrality tendencies could be strengthened by properly influencing public opinion, which was clearly disturbed by Italian policy.

It follows from all this that the Germans had to bear the consequences of the Arabs' negative attitude to Italy and that the former's possibilities in the Arab world depended indirectly upon the latter's position. As we shall see, Italy's position also had a direct influence on German policy.

Division Pol VII, the Auswärtiges Amt leaders and the military authorities did not share Grobba's views on strengthening relations with Ibn Saud. Grobba was told by Auswärtiges Amt that Germany was not interested in closer ties with Ibn Saud because of his ambiguous relation to England. What is more, in the opinion of Berlin officials, Germany could not undertake to supply Saudi Arabia with arms, since the countries of the Arabian Peninsula were the domain of Italian interest. Regard for Italy's position had an even stronger influence on Germany's relations with the Yemen. German attempts at the economic penetration of that country met with much dissatisfaction in Italy.* Hence by April 1939 the opinion prevailed in Auswärtiges Amt that any change of policy toward Saudi Arabia was out of the question.⁴¹

* Despite certain hesitations, the German Government finally decided not to sell the Yemen arms (Kriegsgerät Yemens, DZA Potsdam, AA 68470, particularly Hentig's notes of January 17th and February 23rd, 1939; also Ripken's note of March 20th, 1939).

Government was without foundation, as is suggested by M. Khadduri in *Independent Iraq*, London, 1960, pp. 137-40. See also Salah ed-Din es-Sabbagh, Fursan al-uruba fi al-Iraq (Knights of Arabism in Iraq), Damascus, 1956, p. 74 ff.

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NEGOTIATIONS ON THE SALE OF ARMS TO SAUDI ARABIA

Nevertheless, before long the situation changed to such an extent that Germany stopped hesitating about committing herself in the Arab countries, particularly in Saudi Arabia. In March 1939 Hitler violated the obligations assumed at the Munich conference. He liquidated the truncated Czechoslovak state and made increasingly stern demands upon Poland. This led to the British guarantees to Poland being given and the serious deterioration of Anglo-German relations. In April the Italians invaded Albania. Roosevelt issued a message demanding that Germany guarantee thirty specified nations against aggression. On April 28th Hitler delivered a violent speech in the Reichstag, in which besides alluding to the policies of the Western powers in the Arab countries, he made an especially sharp attack on British policy in Palestine. 42 England and France then hastened to reach an understanding with Turkey. An Anglo-Turkish declaration was issued on May 12th, followed six weeks later by a Franco-Turkish declaration.

In April 1939 Otto von Hentig, Director of Division Pol VII, after a longer visit to Egypt went to Palestine and Iraq.* This trip to a certain extent effected a change in the German Government's views on strengthening relations with Saudi Arabia.†

Apparently feeling after his talks with von Hentig that there was the possibility of a change in Germany's attitude to Saudi Arabia, Fritz Grobba on May 2nd again raised in a despatch to Auswärtiges Amt the matter of Ibn Saud's requests. He repeated his argument regarding that monarch's basic hostility to England and stressed the possibility of using the strategically important Saudi territory in the coming war. This time Woermann 'allowed himself to be convinced' as he noted on the margin of Grobba's letter.⁴³

Thus, by the spring of 1939 the Auswärtiges Amt officials agreed at least to some extent with the views of Rosenberg's APA. The reasons for this change can be inferred from von Hentig's memorandum of May 22nd.⁴⁴ In his notes von Hentig characterised as follows the situation in the Near and Middle East: (a) There were no possibilities for German activity in Egypt, Iraq, Palestine and Syria. Egypt and Iraq were on England's side, the nationalist movement in Palestine was paralysed, while the Syrian Arabs were incapable of pursuing an independent policy. (b) Because of the agreement between

^{*} Von Hentig mentions only his trip to Palestine in his memoirs Mein Leben, eine Dienstreise (My Life: A Service Trip), p. 329.

[†] Grobba claimed he convinced von Hentig (Grobba to Schlobies, Baghdad, April 23rd, 1939, 1605 H/385563).

the Ankara Government and the Western Powers it would not be possible for Germany to use Turkish territory to attack British communications leading from India via Iraq and Palestine. (c) King Ibn Saud was no longer dependent on British funds, since he had a steady income from the royalties of the American Caltex Corporation for the exploitation of oil resources on the Persian Gulf. (d) Italy had no good chance of carrying on activity in Saudi Arabia, when its air-force mission had been removed.

In World War I her alliance with the Sublime Porte furnished Germany with the possibility of military and political activity against the Entente Powers in the East. But when it became clear, on the eve of World War II, that Turkey would at least be neutral,* other possibilities had to be explored of striking at British communications with India from the south. Such a possibility seemed to arise in the Arabian Peninsula. For instance, the Germans could consider setting up supporting bases there for submarines able to attack British shipping on the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf. If Woermann allowed himself to be convinced by Grobba of the importance of relations with Ibn Saud for 'political and military reasons' and of the necessity to avoid improvisation in time of war, but rather 'to build up now in quiet and peace' Germany's positions there, then it is most probable that he had those opportunities in mind.

The conclusion of an agreement between the Western Powers and Turkey must have strengthened this way of thinking. And in the notes of Auswärtiges Amt officials this appears as a prime reason for the change of policy toward Saudi Arabia. 45 Germany was impelled to take this course by the unfavourable situation that arose for the Reich in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Red Sea. This is confirmed by reports of the German Ambassador in Ankara, von Papen, 46 and the British Ambassador, Sir Hugh Knatchbull-Hugessen.⁴⁷ Attolico, Italy's Ambassador at Berlin, stated in his reports to Ciano⁴⁸ that although Germany was in a position to exert pressure on Turkey the results might be doubtful. Germany could make use of the facts that a large part of Turkish exports went to her and that so many German professors, experts and instructors including a military mission played such a large role in Turkish civil and military affairs. Nevertheless, England could replace Germany in the economic field, and France in military matters. In this situation, the 'association of Turkey in the policy of encirclement' of Germany being pursued by Great Britain, decided the position of the Nazi Government. Though the possibility of effective action

^{*} Colonel Rohde, German military attaché in Ankara, held the view that not only should the alliance of Turkey with the Western Powers be considered harmful to Germany, but also Turkish neutrality (DGFP, VI, p. 406).

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against Great Britain from the area south of Turkey was slight, Germany decided to take the chance.

The changed attitude of the German Government to Saudi Arabia could be felt when Khalid al-Hud al-Qarqani made another trip to Berlin in May 1939. This time Ibn Saud's adviser had conversations not only with representatives of the Abwehr, the APA, Auswärtiges Amt and German firms, but he also met with the Reich's top leaders.

Al-Hud was received by Ribbentrop on June 8th. Besides a general exchange of opinions, they discussed the shipment of rifles, anti-aircraft guns and armoured cars as well as the building of a munitions plant in Saudi Arabia. The emissary of Ibn Saud stressed that the fulfilment of these wishes of the King would ease his dependence on England. Ribbentrop expressed Germany's sympathy for the Arabs and commissioned von Hentig* to conduct further negotiations on the supply of arms.

On June 17th al-Hud was received by Hitler at Obersalzberg. The Führer regaled him with a long diatribe on his sympathy for the Arabs, which he said began in his childhood, and he declared his readiness to extend to the Saudis 'active assistance'.⁴⁹ Al-Hud delivered to Hitler a personal letter from his monarch.⁵⁰

By this time the German policy-makers no longer cared so much about unnecessarily endangering relations with Great Britain, but they had to reckon more and more with the Italian viewpoint. Conversations with Italy had already been held on the question of the supply of arms to the Yemen, which German firms wanted to undertake. In these conversations the Italians stressed that the Yemen was in their sphere of influence and the German negotiations with that country were broken off despite the Germans' reservation that they could not resign from economic activity in the Yemen.⁵¹ In practice, though, this reservation was not followed by any concrete steps.⁵² As concerns Saudi Arabia the Germans considered their expansion in that country at least an open question,53 although they were convinced that they would have to contact the Italian Government⁵⁴ before actually establishing co-operation with Ibn Saud. They had no illusion that Italy would not be promptly informed of any eventual transaction with the Saudi King.

During Count Ciano's visit to Berlin, on the occasion of the signing of the Steel Pact on May 21st-23rd, 1939, Woermann informed Ambassador Buti that Saudi Arabia had made many attempts to purchase arms in Germany, and he pointed out the advantages of friendly relations with Ibn Saud in the event of war.

^{*} Von Hentig's notes, Berlin, June 21st, 1939—1605 H/385607-12. Al-Hud's audience with Ribbentrop was adjourned to June 8th because of the visits of Ciano and the Yugoslav Regent Paul to Berlin.

Asked frankly about Italy's position on this matter, the Italian Ambassador replied that decisions in such affairs were made personally by the Foreign Minister, but that in his opinion Italian firms ought to undertake the supply of arms to Saudi Arabia. Buti furthermore considered competition for the favours of the Saudi King undesirable. Woermann then promised that Germany would discuss this question further with the Italians through diplomatic channels.⁵⁵

On June 10th, that is, immediately after al-Hud's audience with Ribbentrop, Woermann addressed a despatch to Germany's Ambassador at Rome which referred to his conversation with Buti, enumerated the wishes of Ibn Saud, and explained why the Italians should relinquish the arms deal with Saudi Arabia to their German partner. Woermann recalled the liquidation of the Italian aerial mission in the land of the Wahhabis and referred to Grobba's conversation with Silitti at Jidda, in which the latter vouchsafed the opinion that Germany had greater opportunities in that country than did Italy.⁵⁶ He thus suggested that Italy should declare her désintéressement in the German—Saudi deal under consideration.

The Italians, however, were not anxious to take up a definite position. They probably did not like either to agree or to say no, considering the rather small-size transaction involved. After the liquidation of the aerial mission, Italo-Saudi relations did not progress successfully. What is more, the choice of al-Hud as emissary to Germany at a time of closer relations between the two Axis partners, could be interpreted as an anti-Italian expression on the part of the Saudi ruler. For al-Hud was a Tripolitanian who had fought the Italians and did not conceal his hostility to Italy during his talks with the Germans.

The Rome conversations took place on the lower levels. Guarnaschelli, Ambassador Buti's deputy, failed to give the councillor of the German Embassy, von Plessen, a clear reply. With the reservation that he was speaking only for himself, Guarnaschelli dealt with Italy's special interest in Saudi Arabia, the great Italian achievements in that country, and wound up by indicating that Italy was herself negotiating to sell arms. His opinions corresponded with those expressed by Buti in his conversations with Woermann.⁵⁷

Al-Hud was meanwhile received by Hitler. Berlin urged on its Rome Ambassador to get a decision, but the Italians delayed their reply, waiting for the arrival of Silitti, who was to report on the question.⁵⁸ Further urging did not help.⁵⁹ Italy's reply did not arrive until July 14th, when the negotiations with al-Hud were basically completed but not finalised. The conviction prevailed then among German officials occupied with the matter that the deal with al-Hud should be finalised without regard to Italy's attitude.⁶⁰

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The Italian reply was communicated to Woermann by Count Magistrati. The Italian Government had no objections to the proposed German-Saudi transaction; it only wished to point to the harmfulness of competition between the two countries in Saudi Arabia. They reminded the Germans that the Italian Government firm SANA operated in Jidda, and they proposed that Germany should make use of that company's services in dealing with Arab countries on the Red Sea. They clearly indicated in this manner that these countries belonged to Italy's political and economic sphere of influence. It may be in place to recall here Hitler's statement during Ciano's visit to Berlin that he recognised Italy's hegemony⁶¹ in the Mediterranean region.

Without going into a basic discussion of Rome's claims, Woermann rejected the intermediation of SANA.

Count Magistrati further expressed his Government's exception to the personality of Ibn Saud's emissary, Khalid al-Hud, who had shown his enmity to Italy while still in Libya. Woermann calmed his interlocutor by pointing to al-Hud's anti-British views and assuring him that the Saudis would use arms only against the British.⁶²

The Italian position, therefore, had no basic effect on the course of events during the negotiations with al-Hud. It only caused some delay in reaching a final agreement. But even so it should not be underestimated: the negotiations took place not long before the outbreak of war and the deal was thus frustrated. The Nazis were confronted with a basic dilemma in their Arab policy, which caused them much concern from then on. They were faced, on the one hand, with a deep Arab dislike for their closest ally, Fascist Italy, and on the other with Italy's aversion to independent German action in that region which she regarded as her sphere of influence.

In their negotiations with al-Hud the Germans showed a willingness to please Ibn Saud. At the beginning Germany offered credits to the amount of 1½ million RM (£125,000) for the purchase of 8,000 rifles and 8 million bullets and for the building of a small cartridge factory. The Saudi representative asked for 6 million RM credit, and demanded privileged prices. 63 Although Iraq's request to purchase arms on credit had been rejected for years, OKW now offered Ibn Saud rifles as a gift. 64 Because of the difficulties in implementing the deal put forward by various German officials, Canaris in the name of OKW strongly supported the proposition. 65

The deal was finalised on July 17th, in the form of a letter to al-Hud⁶⁶ sent on a plain sheet of paper without signature.⁶⁷ It contained three points: (1) the Reich Government declared its readiness to express its sympathy for Saudi Arabia by supplying her with goods, (2) that they were making Ibn Saud a gift of 4,000 rifles 'of the latest

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construction', half of which would be clipped models, as well as 2,000 cartridges for each piece, (3) agreement for the King to order war materials on credit from German firms to the value of 6 million RM. Payments were to be made in seven yearly instalments, and Ibn Saud was obliged to pay the first instalment after the first shipment. Here, too, Germany departed from her long-established tradition of receiving payment of a considerable part of the bill before the order was accepted. A long price list of war materials was appended to the letter. Part of the donated arms was most probably destined for Palestine, where the uprising was dying out.

This deal may not have been realised, for the war broke out about six weeks later and the transport of arms to the Red Sea ports became extremely difficult—not to mention the other changes in this respect brought about by the war.

IBN SAUD'S RELATION TO ENGLAND

It would seem that in contradistinction to the Governments of Iraq and Egypt, the King of Saudi Arabia was little concerned with Britain's reaction to his contacts with Germany. There is no doubt that Ibn Saud wished to make use of the tenser relations between England and Germany. Nevertheless, when he sent his adviser to Berlin the King wanted that visit to attract little publicity and its course to be kept secret. Al-Hud called the Germans' attention to this and Grobba reiterated it in his despatches from Baghdad.⁶⁸

But it was difficult in the prevailing international situation to expect that al-Hud's visit and his reception by Hitler, in particular, would pass off unnoticed. Reuter's issued a despatch on this matter on June 19th and the Bari radio station devoted a special commentary to the event. The authors of this Italian broadcast to Arab countries maintained that Hitler and al-Hud discussed Palestinian affairs and that the British attached great importance to the conversation. The London Daily Express reported the hypothesis of its Cairo correspondent that al-Hud negotiated about German oil concessions. The important and moderate Cairo al-Muqattam and the Baghdad al-Bilad carried similar stories. Arab governmental circles, particularly in Iraq, feared the growth of Ibn Saud's prestige and the strengthening of his position in the Arab world. Go D June 30th the Deutsche diplomatische Korrespondenz, commenting on the al-Hud-Hitler conversation, supported in general terms Arab national demands.

Al-Hud, of course, published a denial of the above, maintaining that he visited Germany for his health. But the matter did not end with the publication of this denial by the Reuter agency and the Deutsches Nachrichtenburo. Ibn Saud protested through his Baghdad

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envoy that it was the German radio which divulged the news of al-Hud's visit. The King stressed that he desired to live in friendship with everyone and did not want the Germans to use Saudi Arabia against England.⁷⁰ He regarded this incident as of such importance that he considered (or at least told the Germans that he did) the possibility of cancelling the arms deal with Germany.⁷¹ Al-Hud's exceptions to German radio propaganda beamed to the East Arab countries⁷² also throw light on the King's attitude.

As a result of the protests, the Germans turned to the Italian Government with the request that their press treat the matter with greater restraint.⁷³ And the German press, too, refrained from any broad discussion of al-Hud's visit.

It follows from the above that, like Arab politicians elsewhere, Ibn Saud avoided any course which might compromise him with England, but allowed himself a secret arms deal because of the remoteness of his country and the weak British information network there. Ibn Saud was always in need of arms, since there was the ever-present, serious problem of maintaining order and compelling the people's obedience. It was enough for one tribe or another merely to feel that the King's forces were weak for threats of revolt to make their appearance.

There is no doubt that aversion to Great Britain was growing in the Arab countries. Besides the Palestine question, there was the ever-increasing desire for independence from the Western Powers. Nor can it be denied that the growth of Axis pressure on the international arena strengthened anti-British and anti-French tendencies. But the Arab countries exhibited extreme caution in strengthening contacts with the enemies of Britain and France. This pertained not only to the contacts with Italy, which the Arab countries knew to be weaker than England and France and which aroused enmity and suspicion because of its colonisation plans, but also to Germany, although the strength of Nazi Germany evoked the Arabs' respect and Hitler was admired for forcing so many concessions from the hitherto almighty British Empire. But the Germans were far away and the power of Britain and France close at hand.

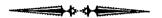
Despite these unfavourable circumstances, the Italians did manage to register some successes in the Arab countries as a result of longlasting efforts. Among other things, Italy managed to establish close contacts with the Mufti of Jerusalem and the Egyptian royal court.*

As we saw, the Reich Government for a long time refrained from greater activity in the Arab countries for fear of embittering relations

^{*} Count Ciano noted in his diary of February 23rd, 1939, that the Egyptian court appealed for Axis support against Great Britain (*Ciano's Diary*, 1939–1943, London 1948).

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with Great Britain. This attitude began to change with the Czechoslovak crisis, but the new policy crystallised slowly and did not unfold fully before the outbreak of the war. The agreement on the supply of arms to Saudi Arabia was one of the few preliminary and modest fruits of the new course. True, it did not go beyond secret diversive attempts at the time. However, Germany was fully confronted with a new dilemma, since every bold plan for the Arab world had to be reconciled with the Italian position.



THE ALLIES AND THE ARAB COUNTRIES

ERMANY invaded Poland on September 1st, 1939, and on the 3rd England and France declared war on Germany. Thus World War II began, the conflict which was to confront Great Britain with grave military and political problems in the Near and Middle East as well. But few of these difficulties made themselves felt in the first months of the war. Like all countries under direct British or French rule, the countries of the Levant, Palestine and Transjordan were automatically embraced in the international decisions of these powers. Iraq and Egypt were tied to Britain by treaties providing that their territories might be used whenever the situation demanded it. Saudi Arabia, it is true, was not bound by a similar treaty, but she could not openly oppose Great Britain, whose fleet controlled the Red Sea and Persian Gulf and who had air bases in Iraq, Egypt and Aden.

But Arab political circles did not show much enthusiasm for the Allied cause. The fact that Italy remained neutral and the danger of war operations was removed from the Near and Middle East gave the Arab world a feeling of relief.¹ True, there was no lack of official assurances that the Arabs supported the cause of democracy, that they were linked by common aims and ideals to the anti-Hitler coalition, that the place of the Arab countries was alongside Great Britain, etc.² But behind these ardent assurances was the conviction that it would be incorrect under existing conditions to offend Great Britain or France.³

Although the theatre of war was far from the Eastern Mediterranean, the position of the local governments and the activity of political groups in the Arab East was not a matter of indifference to Great Britain and France. France had stationed a large army in Syria and Lebanon under the command of General Weygand. As the central point of Britain's whole military system in the Middle

East, Egypt's attitude was of particular importance. As in Palestine, Britain kept many troops in Egypt, and was to some extent interested in winning the co-operation of the native troops. 4 Iraq's importance to Britain lay in her considerable oil output and her strategic position in the direct neighbourhood of the Iranian oilfields and on the overland route from the head of the Persian Gulf to Palestine. Under war conditions this route could become the main line of communication from India to Egypt and Turkey. It should furthermore be borne in mind that in October 1939 Britain and France signed a treaty of alliance with the Ankara Government providing for Turkey's participation on their side in the event of war in the Mediterranean.5 The outlets of the oil pipeline running from Iraq were located at Haifa in Palestine and Tripolis in Syria, and Haifa had a modern refinery. While there were differences of opinion in British governmental and military circles on the necessity of sending an expeditionary corps to France, unanimity reigned on the need for comparatively large military forces in the Middle East. 6 In fact, it was planned to strengthen Britain's garrisons in that region before the war broke out. General Sir Archibald Wavell was appointed commander-inchief of the armed forces there. The motives for this were fear of an Italian invasion from Libya and of internal disorders in the Arab countries.7

With a German victory certain in the Polish campaign, the British chiefs of staff anticipated an attack in the Balkans as one possibility.⁸ As a result, the Near and Middle East assumed a greater importance in Allied strategy. The question assumed an even greater urgency for the French, since General Gamelin considered it necessary to create new fronts so as to draw German troops away from the Western Front,⁹ while General Weygand, commander-in-chief of the French forces in the Levant, considered that military action in the Balkans was very useful.¹⁰ The treaty of alliance with Turkey was to act in the same direction. And when the Allies were engaged with problems of Balkan policy in connection with the Soviet-Finnish war, they again considered the necessity of strengthening their armed forces in the Near and Middle East.¹¹

In connection with the Soviet-Finnish war and the whole relation of forces in Europe at the time, France and England planned hostile measures against the U.S.S.R. from Turkish bases.¹² At that time, that is, from the outbreak of the war in general and in the first few months of 1940 in particular, 'the Soviet danger from the north' was the principal subject of Allied propaganda in the Near and Middle East. Attempts to revive the treaty concluded at Saad-Abad in 1937 by Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and Iraq¹³ were certainly initiated by the Allies, who were trying to make use of the 'Soviet

danger' to strengthen their positions among the ruling circles in the Near and Middle East. About 180,000 troops were stationed in those areas by mid-1940, about 100,000 of them French colonial forces. ¹⁴ However, these forces remained idle, since the Allied top echelons systematically rejected all plans of action in the Balkans.

What was the situation at the time in the Arab countries and in Palestine?

THE SITUATION IN SYRIA AND LEBANON

In the countries of the Levant the French utilised the situation to strengthen their political control. High Commissioner Puaux suspended the Syrian Constitution even before the war broke out. He did the same with the Lebanese Constitution on September 21st, concentrating the authority of the Lebanese Cabinet in the hands of the Secretary of State, Abd Allah Bayhum, and his French advisers. The Communist party and the pro-Fascist Syrian National party were outlawed. The Arab Nationalist Club in Damascus, financed by Germany, was closed down. The arrested Communist and nationalist leaders were sentenced to long prison terms. The French rulers were, however, satisfied with limiting the activity of the main nationalist parties, the National Bloc and the group of Dr. Shahbandar. The majority of leading figures declared their loyalty to France, proclaiming their attachment to democracy. But the dominant feeling among the people was one of fear, remembering the terrible experiences of the previous world war: hunger, epidemics and terror. A universal distrust of England and France prevailed for their failure to keep their promises. Arab aversion was fed by the disappointed hopes of 1936-9 and by the cession of Alexandretta to Turkey. The Palestine rebellion met with a stronger response in Syria and Lebanon than in the other Arab countries. But apathy reigned on the surface and there was little open political activity. 15

THE SITUATION IN PALESTINE

The situation was analogous among the Palestinian Arabs. The destruction caused by the rebellion, the levies forced from the people by the command of the revolt, the emigration of many of the wealthy, the Arab-Jewish mutual boycott, separation from foreign markets—all these combined to make the situation difficult for both Arabs and Jews. The paralysis of the Arab national movement was due no less to internal collapse than to the defeat of the uprising. When the war broke out the *Party of National Defence* (i.e. the Nashashibi clan) declared itself for Great Britain. The most important leaders of the

Huseini clan were then abroad, and the ex-Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin el-Huseini, who left the country in October 1937, was in Beirut with a number of his co-workers, members of the Arab Higher Committee. In October 1939 Hajj Amin, Jemal Huseini and Amin Tamimi, as well as the military commanders of the rebels Fawzi el-Qawuqji, Aref Abd er-Razeq and Sheikh Hasan Salama moved to Baghdad. Great Britain did not get even their verbal aid during the war, but she refrained from seeking the support of the Nashashibi, probably because of belief in the mirage of an understanding with the Mufti.

For the Jewish people there was no choice between one and the other side in the war. Despite the British Government's continuation of the White Paper policy, all Jews, with the exception of tiny groups on the extreme right and extreme left, agreed on the necessity of supporting England. The Executive of the Jewish Agency and the National Council mobilised volunteers for military service under the auspices of Jewish institutions or the British military command. About 25 per cent of the Jewish population responded. Many of the Palestine Jews who were Polish citizens reported to Polish Consulates in the very first days of the war, applying for admission to the Polish army. Of course, the 'mobilisation' declared by Jewish institutions also had indirect political aims. There were understandable political reasons, too, why the British declined the Jewish offers. Only small groups were admitted to regular British units, to two mixed Jewish-Arab and one entirely Jewish company of pioneers—altogether about 1,700 Jews and 400 Arabs.¹⁷ There was, besides, an agreement between the British Security establishment and the military command with illegal Jewish military organisations concerning concrete actions of diversive intelligence character in Palestine and abroad. 18 Up to 1942 British-Jewish co-operation did not go beyond this. And relations remained rather strained because the British Government continued the White Paper policy. When in February 1940 regulations were issued which severely limited the purchase of land by Jews¹⁹ there were mass demonstrations and clashes with the police.

EGYPT'S POSITION

The internal situation in Egypt—the main concentration point of British forces and bases—was a source of constant difficulties. These flowed from the interaction of three main forces: the British Embassy, the Royal Palace, and the *Wafd*, the national mass political party. After the outbreak of the war the King continued to keep the Wafd out of the Government, in agreement with the British Embassy. After Muhammed Mahmud's resignation, Ali Maher-pasha became

Premier. He formed a nationalist-tinted Government to which Great Britain took exception.20 Salah Harb-pasha became Minister of Defence and the well-known nationalist Aziz Ali el-Masri-pasha Chief of Staff. As British sources maintained later, Salah Harb did not facilitate Egypt's military co-operation with Britain.21 As stated by General Wilson, commander of the British land forces in Egypt, Aziz Ali el-Masri praised the German military to his officers and belittled the British and French armies.²² He was an enemy of Great Britain who had contacts with officers engaged in a conspiracy against England.²³ Egyptian public opinion in general opposed participation in the war. Many held the view that Egypt could have retained complete neutrality if it had not been for her dependence on Great Britain. Egypt, it was considered, had no interest in the war.²⁴ Many important leaders had, in fact, opposed the Anglo-Egyptian treaty of 1936 as absolutely tying Egypt to Britain even before the war broke out.* True, some circles were interested mainly in attacking the Egyptian Government, but others were decided opponents of Great Britain. The majority of the Government, with the Premier at the head, were opposed to Egypt being drawn into the war.† Only the Premier's brother Ahmed favoured a declaration of war against Germany at the time.

Egypt severed diplomatic relations with Germany on September 3rd and interned German citizens. Italy and Egypt declared non-belligerency.

Although there is evidence that British aims went much further,²⁵ this position was not contrary to her imperial interests. Egypt's army numbered 40,000 men in September 1939 and it probably played an insignificant role in British plans.²⁶ Egypt's general cooperation was nevertheless of importance to England's war effort.²⁷ This is why the British wanted first of all to strengthen their control over the Egyptian administration. Egypt's measures against the Reich did not end with the severance of diplomatic relations and the departure of the German Consular staff (about 200 persons enjoyed diplomatic immunity). Internment of the Germans and the taking over of their banks and other enterprises proceeded fairly efficiently, since the chief of police, Russel-pasha, was an Englishman.²⁸ But

* The influential Ismail Sidqi-pasha, a leading Egyptian industrialist, spoke in that spirit at the parliamentary debates on December 20th, 1938.

† S. N. Fisher (*The Middle East, a History*, London, 1959, p. 481) has a different view of the Egyptian Premier of the time. Early in 1941 King Farouk informed the United States envoy, Fish, at Cairo, that Ali Maher had promised England on three occasions to declare war on Germany, but the King had prevented him from doing so (Hare to the Secretary of State, Cairo, March 3rd, 1941—FRUS, 1941, Vol. III, Washington, 1959, pp. 264-5). But Ali Maher had a decided influence on the King, who almost entirely depended on his opinion.

co-operation between the British military mission and the Egyptian command did not fare so well. There was no lack of friction and at the beginning of 1940 the Premier—under pressure from the British Embassy—was compelled to remove Aziz Ali el-Masri from his post.²⁹ The nationalists did not relinquish their efforts to take advantage of the war situation in order to force a commitment from the British on their demands. Thus, on April 1st, 1940, the leader of the Wafd opposition, Nahhas-pasha, addressed a memorandum to the British Government demanding evacuation of their troops after the war, the commencement of negotiations on the question of the Sudan and assurances of Egyptian representation at the peace conference.³⁰

IRAQ'S POSITION

The question of declaring war on Germany perhaps aroused an even sharper controversy in Iraq. Those favouring Great Britain considered that it would be desirable to enter the war the moment Turkey did so, for that country was allied with Iraq by the Saad-Abad pact. But the younger officers—in general ill disposed towards England—were afraid of being sent off to the front. Some politicians, especially Rashid Ali el-Kilani, wanted concessions on Palestine and Syria as the price for Iraq's entry into the war. But when Egypt severed diplomatic relations with Germany, Iraq could no longer hesitate, and on September 5th she followed suit. The German envoy, Dr. Grobba, left the country and German citizens were interned and turned over to the British, who deported them to India. Some leaders, former Premier Jamil el-Midfai, for instance, criticised the handing of the Germans over to the British. And Iraq, too, published a declaration of non-belligerence.

A number of regulations and decrees were issued in Egypt and Iraq, on the basis of which British troops and communications were to be assured safety. They were also to be directed against German agents.

When the war broke out Nuri es-Said, then Premier of Iraq, was disposed to meet Britain's wishes.* But he met opposition from the Cabinet when he proposed to declare war against Germany (in September 1939 and February 1940).³³ The arrival of the Jerusalem Mufti in Baghdad revived interest in the Palestine question. Hajj Amin el-Huseini's activity was financed by the Iraqi Government,

^{*} The British Ambassador was said to have demanded command of Iraq's army by English officers, a general mobilisation and shipment of Iraqi troops to Palestine and Egypt (Gabrielli to Ciano, Baghdad, September 16th, 1939, IDDI, Series 9, Vol. I, Rome 1954, p. 165).

which together with the Egyptian Cabinet approached the British Government on their coming to an agreement with the Huseini clan.34 Generally speaking, the presence of the Palestinians strengthened the anti-British elements in Iraq, whose ruling coterie was divided by sharp conflicts. International questions occupied an important place in those controversies, but personal and group interests predominated, while people with differing views on Iraq's policy towards the war at times worked together. Thus, during the reconstruction of his Government in mid-February 1940. Nuri Said joined the anti-British General Taha el-Hashimi and the similarly minded group of four colonels (known as the Golden Square) against three other high officers who opposed Nuri Said's pro-British policy.35 Despite the strong influence of Nazi propaganda, the views of the anti-British group were not yet crystallised and they were far from extremist conceptions at the start of the war. They regarded the war as the 'only chance' to attain their pan-Arab aims, as an occasion which 'only Allah knew when it would recur', and they did not exclude an agreement with Great Britain—on their conditions, of course.³⁶ Haji Amin el-Huseini, however, expressed much more extreme views. He considered a British victory as contrary to Arab interests and admitted the necessity of refraining from participating in the war against Great Britain. But, he maintained, if the U.S.S.R., Japan and Italy supported the Germans, then the Arabs ought to do likewise and organise a general revolt against the Allies.³⁷

Great Britain had nevertheless no special cause for fearing the situation in Iraq as long as the 'phoney war' lasted.

KING IBN SAUD'S POSITION

Saudi Arabia did not break off diplomatic relations with the Reich, but she did not permit the presence of a German envoy at Jidda. Ibn Saud, who had just arrived at a secret understanding with Germany for the supply of arms, tried to justify his behaviour to Berlin. On November 15th Khalid al-Hud addressed a letter to Woermann, chief of the political department of Auswärtiges Amt. He informed the Nazi rulers that Ibn Saud had received with gratitude and satisfaction his report on the Führer's friendship and esteem for the Arabs, and he appended the declaration of neutrality by Saudi Arabia. He added that the Saudi Government was considering the opening of a Consulate at Berlin when the right time came.³⁸

Moreover, when the Iraqi Government sent a mission to the Yemen in February 1940 and Nuri Said planned to visit Riyadh in March, the Saudi Government assured the Italian envoy that it had no intention of changing its policy in favour of England and asked for

an announcement to be made on the Bari or Berlin radio that Saudi Arabia wished to maintain strict neutrality.³⁹

The Reich Government's hope of establishing a diplomatic mission in Saudi Arabia came to nothing. The attempts in this direction at the end of 1939 and the beginning of 1940 ended in failure.* Ibn Saud sincerely wished to assure himself of Germany's good favour, but he also sought to avoid doing anything which might be displeasing to England.

In February 1940 Fish, the United States envoy to Cairo, deposited his credentials at Jidda, thus implementing a 1939 decision on the establishment of relations between Saudi Arabia and the United States of America.⁴⁰

When the world conflict started the Arab countries tried to maintain neutrality, though of a special type in view of the presence of British troops in Egypt and Iraq. They did not, therefore, meet all the Allies' demands, but the British were not too insistent, since it was not a matter of necessity.

It is doubtful if a war declaration on Germany by the Arab governments would have been of greater help to England. For it should not be forgotten that such a step would have been very unpopular with a large section of the populations of these countries.

Owing to the Axis victories British and French prestige continued to decline among the Arabs, although in September 1939 the majority of Arab leaders seem to have been convinced of the Allies' final victory. However, the fact that the Arab countries could not count on any aid from the outside, owing to their distance from the arena of war operations, and therefore had to be concerned about not enraging Great Britain, was decisive. From this point of view their situation was worse than before the war broke out.

GERMANY AND THE ARAB COUNTRIES

As far as Germany was concerned, it is known that the Nazi regime was preparing to follow up the invasion of Poland by striking at the West with the aim of defeating France and compelling Great Britain to negotiate peace on Hitler's terms. In risking war against England and France, Hitler reckoned that the very size of their empires would to a certain extent be a source of weakness. At the conference with the military command on August 22nd, 1939, at Obersalzberg, the Führer expressed the view that England's hands were tied because

* Mackensen to AA, Rome, January 22nd, 1940—71/51496. The Saudi Finance Minister turned, in the name of the King, to the Italian envoy with the request that his Government should explain to Berlin that it would be better for the time being to give up the idea of sending a German envoy to Jidda.

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of her strained relations with Italy in the Mediterranean, with Japan in East Asia and with the Muslim nations in the Middle East.⁴¹ But it does not seem that the Reich leaders considered then that the utilisation of the possibilities in the Arab East required active measures on their part.

With the war beginning to drag out and their inability to mount an offensive on the Western fronts immediately after their September victory, the Germans felt compelled to take into consideration the concentration of Allied troops in the Middle East. On November 23rd Hitler ordered his generals to work out several variants of possible operations: against the Scandinavian countries, the Balkans and the Middle East. And as we know from General Halder's war diary, the General Staff started the necessary operational studies, including the concentration of Near and Middle East specialists.⁴²

There seems to be a correspondence between the anticipated war operations and the direction in which some of the most critical materials for the German war machine were obtained: iron ore from Sweden and oil from Rumania. In the concentration of Allied troops in the Near East the Führer saw a threat to the Balkans, and therefore to the normal supply of liquid fuel for the army. In general, German documents indicate that a calm situation in the Balkans was one of the imperatives of German policy, and the fear of the disturbance of peace there came not only from anticipated Allied action but also from other European Powers not at war with Germany then, namely, the U.S.S.R. and Italy. It is known today that the Allies rejected plans to land in the Balkans and even efforts to conduct sabotage in Rumania, 43 mainly out of the fear of the effect of such actions on Italy's position. Nevertheless, Berlin had to reckon with the possibility of such actions as a result of the concentration of Allied troops in the Middle East.

The Germans tried to obviate that danger, not by energetic measures in the Arab countries, for which they had no opportunities then, but by creating a threat at the far rear of the Allied troops' concentration. For this purpose the Germans tried to influence the Soviet Union to take counter-measures against the concentration of British, French and Turkish troops in the Middle East, and tried to exploit in their propaganda the increase of Soviet forces in Transcaucasia. They also wanted to create a danger to the frontiers of British India, using Afghanistan as a base.* The Germans wanted to

^{*} Differences developed on this between the APA, which had contact with the existing Government, and Auswärtiges Amt, which favoured organisation of a coup d'état and the replacement on the Afghan throne of Amanullah, who had been forced to abdicate in 1929 (Memoranda of the APA, December 12th and 18th, 1939, DGFP VIII, pp. 527-9 and 550-5.

secure the aid of the U.S.S.R. for their Afghanistan diversion. Brauchitsch, Commander-in-Chief of Germany's land forces, told Halder⁴⁵ on January 1st, 1940, that the Reich was interested in directing Soviet expansion to the Bosporus, Afghanistan and India, which would assure the peace in the Balkans which was so necessary for the Germans. On January 6th Jodl prepared a memorandum 'Policy and the War Effort in the East' which the OKW chief Keitel submitted to the Reich's highest officials.⁴⁶

This document shows that Jodl regarded it as in the interests of the German war effort to maintain the neutrality of the Balkans so as not to commit German forces there. He also regarded it as advantageous to compel the Allies to maintain a large army in Syria by creating as much trouble as possible for the British in India and the Arab countries without involving large German forces. Jodl understood that the main purpose of the Allied army in the Middle East was defensive, apart from maintaining internal order. But at the same time he recognised the danger of the British opening a new Balkan front when the opportunity proved favourable. He regarded it as highly desirable, also, to divert Soviet forces in a southern direction; but he doubted whether this was feasible. Nevertheless, Halder's diary indicates that further orders were issued elaborating plans for war operations in the Balkans and Caucasus⁴⁷ and for more accurate information on British moves in the Middle East.⁴⁸

In the perspective of our present knowledge of German policy and plans in the period of the so-called phoney war, it must be said that there was no real foundation then for Britain's fear of an attack on the Balkans and a threat to the Middle East from the North. 49 For the Germans had no intention then of creating trouble in the Balkans and they themselves estimated that the Soviet position left them without the means to 'make trouble' in the Middle East. The time for Nazi war plans in the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal and the countries of the Middle East came only after Hitler's meeting with Mussolini at the Brenner Pass on March 18th, 1940, when the possibility arose of Italy's entry into the war. And this found expression in Hitler's directive of April 4th, 1940. According to this directive, Italy was requested, among other things, in the event of her entering the war, to tie up the British and French forces in the Mediterranean and to disrupt East-West communications there, to end British naval domination in the eastern part of the sea and, in particular, to block the Suez Canal. Italy was also to operate from East African bases against Allied traffic in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean.50

There remained some possibility of stirring up internal unrest in the Arab lands, and Jodl certainly had that in mind in his January

6th memorandum. But with the outbreak of war Germany's opportunities for political, diversive and espionage activities greatly declined. The situation was otherwise with Italy, who did not enter the war on Germany's side in 1939. The problem arose as to the attitude of the Reich Government towards the Arab states which had severed diplomatic relations with Germany and were basically allies of Great Britain. In particular, a decision had to be made on how to treat the citizens of those countries who lived in Germany or in the states occupied by her.

As stated above, in September 1938 Auswärtiges Amt informed the envoys of Iraq and Egypt that the German Government would not retaliate if the governments there were compelled to apply certain measures against Germans in the event of war. The Arab states were in that case to be treated as captives of England.⁵¹ The Germans made a similar assurance a year later and the Egyptian envoy even received it in writing.⁵² In case of war, Germany's rulers promised that Egyptian citizens would be able to remain in Germany and pursue their affairs without police surveillance, except for the limitations applying to all foreign citizens.⁵³

This was done for a variety of reasons. The general attitude of the German Government to the Arab world played a role here,⁵⁴ because of the very evident animosity shown there to England and the Jews. It also must not be forgotten that a certain number of German citizens lived in the Arab countries and in Palestine. In Egypt there were originally about 2,000 Germans, of whom about 1,600 managed to leave shortly before or after the outbreak of the war. A large number of the Palestinian Germans also managed to get out, leaving their wives and children, nuns, members of religious institutions and slightly over a hundred men of military age.⁵⁵ These were interned and some of them were later deported. None of them returned. No data are available on the number of Germans in Iraq, but very few remained there after the war broke out. The Nazis probably expected that the German citizens in Egypt and Iraq would, after a while at least, be able to fulfil certain tasks entrusted to them.

The promise not to retaliate was violated by the Germans.

About 120 German citizens were arrested in Egypt in the first days of September, but most of them were quickly released. Only nineteen were kept in prison for a month. Among them were several functionaries of the NSDAP who worked as actual or camouflaged officials of German Consulates or missions during the period of the sharpest international tension, before the outbreak of the war. In retaliation for these arrests Germany prohibited the departure of Egyptian citizens and detained the personnel of that country's Legation. They were later ordered to register with the police and their

places of residence were restricted, as in the case of citizens of countries at war with Germany.⁵⁶ Intervention by the Italian Embassy brought no results.⁵⁷ When these measures failed to release the Nazis in Egypt, the German Government increased the repression of Egyptian citizens. Auswärtiges Amt turned to Himmler, as Reichsführer S.S. and chief of police, with the proposal to retaliate for the internment or arrest of Germans in Egypt, Palestine and the Union of South Africa with the arrest of ten citizens of each of these countries. And it specifically named two important Egyptian citizens: Dr. Hilmi, a physician, and Dr. Cotta, president of the German-Egyptian Chamber of Commerce,⁵⁸ as among those to be arrested (although the latter showed a marked servility toward the German Government). These demands were later toned down.⁵⁹

At that point there commenced an exchange of views between Germany and Egypt through the intercession of the Swedish Cairo legation (which represented German interests there), the Afghan legation at Berlin (which agreed to look after Egyptian affairs in Germany), and the International Red Cross at Geneva. Besides, the Italian Embassy, which wanted to stress its friendly relations to the Egyptian royal court, intervened with Auswärtiges Amt. So did Iran's envoy at Berlin. On May 12th, 1941, Ribbentrop finally decided to release the interned Egyptians.*

^{*} Wopermann's notes, Berlin, May 16th, 1941—266/172618-19. In connection with the flight of Rudolf Hess, who occupied himself with the question of the Egyptian citizens, their release appears to have been delayed.

V

THE FALL OF FRANCE AND THE DECLARATIONS OF OCTOBER 23rd/DECEMBER 5th, 1940



TALY declared war on England and France on June 10th, 1940. The Arab countries thus became front-line areas. From then on the Mediterranean and North Africa were important centres of war operations which lasted for three years. Egypt was adjacent to the Italian colonies Cyrenaica and Tripolitania; while the Italian possessions on the Red Sea—Abyssinia and Somalia—constituted a certain danger to the Arabian Peninsula and the Sudan as well as to British communications along the Red Sea.

When Italy entered the war important changes were occurring in Anglo-Arab relations. The first defeats of the Allied troops, followed by the fall of France, made a tremendous impression in the Arab countries. A considerable section of the people regarded an Axis victory as a certainty within a short time.

FALL OF THE ALI MAHER-PASHA GOVERNMENT

A change in the ruling circles' attitude to Great Britain was most discernible in Egypt, which was directly threatened by an Italian invasion. Britain's demand for a declaration of war on Italy was ignored by Egypt. The Government of Ali Maher-pasha, then chief of the court clique, only agreed to the severance of diplomatic relations. But Mazzolini, the Italian envoy, delayed his departure. The internment of suspect Italians also met with certain difficulties, for there were about 60,000 of them in the country—many more than Germans—and they had stronger contacts with the local population. Internees were often released by order of members of the Government.¹

In general, the authorities procrastinated in taking measures

against the Italians. Even before Italy entered the war Ali Maherpasha, in reply to an official query from London, stated that in the event of England being engaged in war against Italy his Government would discharge all obligations under the treaty, but it would not declare war on Italy unless she attacked Egypt.² In the middle of May Ali Maher communicated the same message to Italian envoy Mazzolini.3 As she wished to prevent Italy from waging war on Egyptian territory, Cairo reiterated this assurance several times and Ali Maher used the occasions to express his dislike of England.4 The Government clearly wanted to avoid any measures which could jeopardise Egyptian neutrality.5 When Italy did enter the war the Egyptian Government issued an indefinite declaration to the effect that it was studying the situation from the viewpoint of Egypt's interests, and called upon the public to remain calm and orderly. 6 Diplomatic relations with Italy were severed on June 12th, but the Premier made a declaration at a closed session of Parliament on that same day that: (1) Egypt remained loyal to her treaty with England and would render all the necessary aid, but only within the country's borders; (2) Egypt would not join hostilities unless: (a) Italian troops encroached on Egyptian territory, (b) Egyptian cities were bombarded, or (c) military installations were attacked by air. This declaration was reiterated in a note to Rome. According to that note, a land attack on British military installations would not be considered an act of aggression against Egypt. And when the Italians raided Sollum and Marsa Matruh, which involved many Egyptian victims, Ali Maher declared on June 17th that these clashes should be regarded as border incidents which could be settled through diplomatic

That declaration was probably issued in agreement with Italy. Large sections of the public, it is true, did not favour a declaration of war against states merely because they were enemies of Great Britain. If Egypt then maintained any contact with Germany, it was presumably only with the Abwehr and not on a political plane.

The British concluded that the King and Ali Maher's Government were at best pursuing a policy of reassuring the Italians. Farouk and his supporters in the Government could not but be aware of the smallness of Britain's forces in the Middle East. In this situation, the British War Cabinet had recourse to diplomatic pressure on Farouk. Britain's ambassador, Sir Miles Lampson (later Lord Killearn), had several sessions with Egyptian officials and was received by the King. Ali Maher resigned shortly afterwards (on June 23rd). On the 27th the King appointed Hasan Sabri-pasha, but he was not the best choice from a British viewpoint. In turn, the British Government withdrew the previous demand that Egypt should declare war on

Italy. So much can be gathered at least from the British declaration of June 21st, 1940, denying any intention to force a war declaration from Cairo, unless Egypt was attacked by the common enemy. According to this declaration, England only wanted the fulfilment of the 1936 treaty and demanded that the Egyptian Government take steps against any activity which might harm the British war effort.*

The new Government renewed the assurance that war would be declared if Italy should attack Egypt.9 On September 13th, 1940, Italian forces crossed the Egyptian border and advanced about 80 kilometres to Sidi Barrani. The Egyptians nevertheless limited themselves to proclaiming a state of emergency. In protest against the Government's failure to declare war, Ahmed Maher-pasha, representative of the Saadists and leader of the party, resigned from the Cabinet. It should be recalled that he had favoured from the outset Egypt's entering the war on Britain's side. Ahmed Maher believed in a British victory and he remonstrated in a speech (September 19th, 1940) that Egypt would not be in a position to demand full independence if the Egyptians did not take part in their own defence.¹⁰ However, the majority of Egypt's politicians, primarily the King (who was popular at the time and played a dominant role in shaping policy), rejected this viewpoint. Constantly resorting to new pretexts, the Government evaded declaring war on the Axis and showed reluctance to sever diplomatic relations with Axis satellites, whose representatives in Egypt constituted important channels of information for Berlin and Rome. Still, Great Britain tolerated the situation in order to avoid a possibly more serious crisis. For such a crisis would threaten to immobilise large forces for an indefinite period. Nevertheless, the freedom of movement of Britain's opponents was very limited in Egypt, owing to the concentration of English troops there.11

IRAQ'S NEW GOVERNMENT

The situation was different in Iraq, a country much farther removed from the theatre of war operations. Comparatively few British troops were stationed there—mainly air forces—and unlike the situation in Egypt, they were based only on two points: Habbaniya and Shuaiba. Iraq's army was numerically stronger (about 60,000 men) and was also equipped with some aircraft. Direct British influence over the Government institutions was weaker than in Egypt, since the Iraqis managed more effectively to keep free of British advisers and high officials.

* Sir Miles Lampson declared to the U.S. envoy in August 1940 that he did not insist on Egypt declaring war on the Axis (Fish to the Secretary of State, Cairo, August 21st, 1940, FRUS, 1940, Vol. III, Washington, 1958, p. 474).

The state of ever-recurring political crisis in the country since 1936 was expressed, among other things, by the army's intervention in political life. The direct cause of the early 1940 crisis was the murder of the Finance Minister, Rustum Haidar, one of the most influential members of the Government. Various army officers kept conspiring now with one, now with another politician. Early in 1940 these plots primarily concerned internal problems and had little to do with world politics.

Nuri Said's Government resigned on March 31st and a new Cabinet was formed, headed by Rashid Ali el-Kilani. Nuri es-Said took the foreign affairs portfolio; Taha el-Hashimi, defence; Naji Shawkat, justice; Naji es-Suweidi, finance; Omar Nazmi, communications and public works; Sadeq Bassam, education; the pro-British Amin Zaki, trade; and Ruuf el-Bahrani, social affairs. This was the Iraqi Government during the fall of France and Italy's entry into the war on the side of Hitler.

After becoming Premier, Rashid Ali, an old opponent of the treaty with Great Britain, did not openly advocate changing the foreign policy. His April 6th report to Parliament contained some equivocal foreign policy pronouncements. He resorted to this tactic because public opinion, and especially the extreme nationalist clubs supporting the Government, was becoming ever more prone to anti-British moods. This tendency grew stronger in the following months when the Axis states were scoring victories. The Pan-Arabist groupings, strong in Iraq, increasingly clearly inclined towards the Axis, which, like them, rejected the *status quo*. In this situation Rashid Ali was emerging as spokesman for the anti-British tendency.

How strongly the Allies' defeats influenced Iraqi politicians is indicated by the fact that even the pro-British Nuri Said began to seek contact at this time with the Axis. 13 Basically though, Nuri Said and Amin Zaki tended to support Great Britain, while Taha el-Hashimi and Naji Shawkat inclined toward the Nazis. Moreover, the ex-Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin el-Huseini, was an important political factor in the country. 'With regard to the Mufti', wrote the U.S. envoy at Baghdad, 'my investigations convince me that he is the most highly respected and influential individual in Iraq today, both in religious and political circles. . . . He has gained a large following in Palestine and Syria and he is now developing a similar influence in Iraq. He is thus becoming a power to be reckoned with in the Arab world.' 14 In Baghdad, Hajj Amin established connections with the military clique and wielded a strong influence on political events. 15

The pro-British group in the Government thus became isolated. When Italy declared war on Great Britain the Iraqi Government refused to break off diplomatic relations with Rome, despite the

efforts of British Ambassador Sir Basil Newton (former Ambassador to Prague). The small number of Italians interned were soon released with the right to return to their country. Amin Zaki resigned in protest.¹⁶

Hence the Italian envoy Gabrielli remained in Baghdad and the Iraqi Government thus preserved the possibility of contact with the Axis. This fact was of major importance, since a sharp discussion arose in the Cabinet after the fall of France on the attitude to England. The view prevailed that a British defeat was a matter of the near future. The Jerusalem Mufti, the dominant group of army officers and a majority of the Ministers considered it necessary to adopt a strictly neutral attitude to the war, and to limit to a minimum fulfilment of the treaty obligations towards England. The collapse of France heartened the Syrian emigrés in Baghdad and their friends the Iraqi Pan-Arabists. The idea of a revolution in Syria against the French was very popular in these circles. The Mufti was also very much concerned with rekindling the flames of revolt in Palestine. He sent emissaries there in May and June to raise the spirits of his followers and to explore the possibilities for an uprising.¹⁷ On both questions—their position on the war and stirring up a revolt in Syria —the army officers and civilian leaders wanted to consult with Turkey as an ally of Iraq and Great Britain and as a power bordering on Syria.

NAJI SHAWKAT'S TRIP TO TURKEY

On June 19th the Iraqi Government officially announced that it was sending a delegation to Turkey—a co-signatory of the Saad-Abad pact with Iraq—to discuss some pressing political problems. The delegation was composed of both political extremes represented in the Government, Nuri es-Said and Naji Shawkat, who arrived in Ankara on June 24th and were received by the Turkish Foreign Minister, Saracoğlu.

Turkey had failed to discharge her obligations under the treaty of October 1939, when Italy entered the war. She had announced instead that Turkey would not take part in the war and had tried to justify her position by arguing that she had signed a treaty with both England and France, whereas only England was now at war with the Axis. But it is known that Turkey was apprehensive of Italian expansion in the Eastern Mediterranean and disturbed at Germany's growing military might. It did not seem that the Turks would be able to give the Iraqis clear advice in these circumstances. If one is to believe Nuri Said, Saracoğlu advised that Iraq should proclaim, like Turkey, that she would not take part in the war. 18 After a week of

deliberations Nuri Said returned and Naji Shawkat continued his travels. He went to Constantinople, ostensibly for medical treatment, and saw von Papen, whom he contacted through the Hungarian envoy, Zoltan de Mariássy. Shawkat carried a letter of introduction from the ex-Mufti of Jerusalem in the name of the Arab Higher Committee. Hajj Amin in this letter congratulated Hitler on his victories and requested that the Reich leaders should discuss with Naji Shawkat the Arab question, the future of Palestine and cooperation between the Arabs and Germany in general. He further expressed the hope that Germany's final victory would bring the Arabs 'independence and complete liberation as well as the creation of their unity', and he offered to conclude a treaty of friendship and collaboration with the Reich.

The conversation between Naji Shawkat and von Papen took place on July 5th, 1940, in the presence of Seiler, at that time German Consul-General in Turkey. Shawkat apologised for the fact that Iraq had broken off relations with Germany, pointed to the current policy of his Government in maintaining relations with Italy and accented the nationalist trend of the Iraqi Cabinet and its desire for liberation from British domination. On Papen's hint, the Iraqi emissary promised cautiously that Iraq's army would fight beside Germany when the proper time came. Shawkat suggested that the Germans, for their part, could begin by helping to establish a national government in Syria. He warned of the possibility of the British occupying Syria and assured von Papen that an Arab uprising would take place in Palestine. In line with the views then prevalent in Germany, von Papen stated that the development of the situation in the Near East was primarily the concern of Italy and that the Reich would transmit the Arabs' desires to Rome. Naji Shawkat did not conceal the Arabs' fear of Italian imperialism and indicated that Germany should use her influence with Rome to obtain solutions in line with the interests of the Arab national movement.²¹ Iraq's spokesman also advanced a proposition that the conversations should be continued in Ankara between Iraq's envoy, Kamel el-Kilani (brother of the Premier), and Dr. Grobba. The main topic was to be the question of the renewal of diplomatic relations between the two states. 22 This question was also raised by the Iraqi Government with the Italian envoy at Baghdad.²³

DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY IN BAGHDAD

The Baghdad Government displayed a lively diplomatic activity during Naji Shawkat's stay in Turkey. By agreement with the Mufti and the four colonels of the Golden Square, Rashid Ali requested of the envoy, Luigi Gabrielli, that the Italian Government should

issue a declaration assuring their sympathy for the Arabs' national aspirations. With the conflict between the two groupings in the Iraqi Government in mind, Gabrielli made the following written declaration:

His Excellency Count Ciano, the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, has instructed me to inform Your Excellency that coherently with the policy so far followed Italy aims at ensuring the complete independence and territorial integrity of Syria and the Lebanon as well as of Iraq and the countries under British mandate. In consequence Italy will oppose any eventual British or Turkish pretensions for territorial occupation whether in Syria, Lebanon or Iraq.²⁴

At the same time the majority of Iraq's Ministers took up an unyielding attitude towards fulfilling the obligations of the 1930 treaty with England, and tried to use it as a bargaining-point for Pan-Arabist demands. For her part, Britain wanted to win over Iraq to more active participation in the war and in particular to agree to some of her troops being sent to Egypt.²⁵ On June 21st Sir Basil Newton requested Baghdad's agreement to

On June 21st Sir Basil Newton requested Baghdad's agreement to the landing of British troops at Basra, from where they were to proceed over Iraqi territory to Haifa in Palestine. ²⁶ Unwilling to comply, the Iraqi Government decided to apply a restrictive interpretation to the Anglo-Iraqi treaty.* On July 1st Iraq addressed a note to the British Embassy agreeing to the landing of troops, but with the reservation that their numbers be limited and that a time limit be fixed for their presence on Iraqi territory, etc. It was finally agreed that British troops might land in Iraq, but that they had no right to remain there, nor were they, under any circumstances, to concentrate in large formations.

Pro-British Iraqi politicians and English partisans of a pro-Arab policy also actively participated in the bargaining with the British Government over Arab demands. The Iraqi side made it understood that it was ready to act in accordance with British desiderata, but only on condition that Syria received independence, the White Paper on Palestine was implemented and Iraq was supplied with adequate arms.²⁷ Variants of these demands circulated during the visit to Iraq of Colonel S. F. Newcombe of the British Propaganda Ministry, who played a role in the Arab revolt during World War I. This was perhaps the last attempt of the British Government to persuade the

* Certain of its strength and influence, the British Government did not try to make precise formulations in the treaties with the Arab countries. They considered that they would be able to interpret vague points in accordance with their wishes. This was also the case in the question of delimiting the southern frontier of Saudi Arabia, where the Buraimi Oasis is situated, which is now a subject of conflict. (See G. Rendel, *The Sword and the Olive*, London, 1957, p. 83.)

ex-Mufti and other Palestinian leaders living in Iraq to accept the White Paper of May 17th, 1939. In the conversation between Newcombe, Jemal el-Huseini (cousin of Hajj Amin) and Nuri Said a plan was projected to establish a national government in Palestine. In return, the Huseini clan was to undertake the obligation of supporting Great Britain in the war, Iraq was to declare war on the Axis and to provide two divisions for combat in the Western Desert.²⁸

Various proposals were made on the question of Syria. There was talk of the Iraqi army occupying that country. The possibility was also considered of requesting the Vichy Government to restore the status preceding July 1939, when the Syrian Constitution was suspended.²⁹

The Palestine question occupied the main place in the Baghdad negotiations. For in the opinion of pro-British Arab politicians and pro-Arab British personalities, the Palestine problem was the 'root of all the evils which disturb and weaken Anglo-Iraqi relations'. But the British Government was not inclined to make any further concessions on Palestine. The Chamberlain Cabinet which issued the White Paper was out of the saddle, and Winston Churchill, who became head of the Coalition Government, had formerly sharply criticised the document. Perhaps the most important factor influencing the British Government's position was the unconditional opposition of the Jewish population of Palestine to the constitutional reform provided by the White Paper. Abandonment of this reform restrained the Zionists from openly rebelling. On August 29th the British Government rejected the Baghdad propositions.*

It is not known whether the failure to accept the Baghdad proposals decidedly influenced the Iraqi Pan-Arabists to retain contact with the Axis. For much broader issues than the Palestine problem were essentially involved. It was a matter of Britain's position in all the Arab countries and not only in Iraq. For during this critical period of continued German victories and direct threat to both the British Isles and England's position in the Middle East, the Arab politicians' inclination to play both sides led them at least partly to support Britain's enemies. It appeared possible to Arab politicians, in the new world situation, to free Iraq and the other Arab countries and to take steps towards Arab unity by coming to an agreement with the Axis Powers. Be that as it may, the Jerusalem Mufti did not rely on the Baghdad negotiations and did not participate in them.† In

^{*} G. Kirk, The Middle East in the War, London, 1954, p. 64. In Kirk's opinion Shawkat's second trip to Ankara was occasioned by the rejection of the Baghdad propositions by the British Government.

[†] It can be gathered from German documents as well as from the ex-Mufti's conversation with M. Khadduri on May 8th, 1958, that Hajj Amin was opposed

fact, Osman Kemal Haddad—the Mufti's personal secretary—visited von Papen (with a passport issued in the name of Tawfik Ali Al Shakir)³² as much as three weeks prior to the British reply on the Baghdad proposals. And Naji Shawkat again visited Ankara early in September on the pretext of seeking medical advice.

HADDAD'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GERMANS

Hajj Amin's private secretary spoke to von Papen much more concretely than did Naji Shawkat in July. He informed the Reich Ambassador that Italy had already given the Iraqi Government a written assurance supporting the independence of all mandated or protectorate Arab countries. He made clear that Iraq wanted a similar declaration from Germany so that she might, on that basis, revive diplomatic relations with Berlin. Haddad promised, in his Government's name, that Nuri Said would be removed from the Cabinet, and indicated that a revolt could be organised in Palestine from Syrian territory, which should be of definite help to the Axis in the fight against Britain. He further asserted that the army was in real control of Iraq and that there was an agreement with Ibn Saud on the questions of Palestine independence, the removal of Emir Abd Allah and the joining of Transfordan to Palestine. The strength of Iraq's army and the problem of Arab unity were the subjects of further discussions between Haddad and von Papen.* Anglo-Iraqi relations had been growing strained, reported Haddad, since Iraq had refused permission for British troops to pass through the country on the way from India. As can be seen, Haddad did not always stick to the truth. With Germany's permission, he proceeded to Berlin via Budapest on a passport made out to Max Müller and he stayed there in a private boarding-house (at Winterfeldtstrasse, no. 6).33

In August and the beginning of September Hajj Amin's private secretary had a number of talks in Berlin with Grobba, Melchers and Weizsäcker.³⁴ He represented himself in the conversations as the representative of the Arab world, or at least of its Asian part. He thus informed the Germans that some kind of co-ordinating committee of

* U.K. Haddad, *Harakat Rashid Ali al-Kilani 1941 sana* (The Rashid Ali el-Kilani Movement of 1941), Sidon, 1950, pp. 25–26. By Arab unity Haddad understood co-ordination of foreign policy, defence, customs unification, etc.

to the talks with Newcombe (*Middle East Journal*, 1962, p. 331). It can also be inferred from German documents that the Mufti expressed his suspicions of Musa el-Alami, who participated in the negotiations.

all Arab countries under the leadership of the Mufti existed in Iraq. According to Haddad, this committee was composed of Rashid Ali, Naji Suweidi and Naji Shawkat, leading army officers and deputy Yunis Sebawi of Iraq; Shukri Quwatli, Zaki Khatib and others of Syria; King Ibn Saud's private secretary Sheikh Yusuf Yasin and, the King's adviser Khalid al-Hud of Saudi Arabia, and the Mufti, who represented Palestine. This committee, maintained Haddad, had for some time tried to contact Germany, but without success. In the middle of June it had attempted to contact the Germans via Italian diplomatic channels and through Emir Shekib Arslan at Geneva. The latter was to inform the German and Italian Governments of the Iraqis' desire to co-operate with the Axis.* Another attempt had been made by Naji Shawkat's mission to Ankara.

Haddad presented a rather distorted picture of the relationships in the Arab committee and it is not likely that he did so on his own initiative. In fact, the Jerusalem Mufti was active on a wide scale in Baghdad, maintaining contact with important political figures and attempting to win over the anti-British Iraqi Pan-Arabists and Syrian political exiles. He was aided primarily by his Palestinian adherents, who formed his more confidential staff. Haddad, however, belittled the role of the Palestinians in his desire to stress the Mufti's influence over the Arab world as a whole. For the same purpose he conveniently co-opted on to the Arab committee two Saudi Arabian representatives, probably without their knowledge. Rashid Ali was not a member of that committee either.†

The Mufti's private secretary presented the strong desire of his chiefs for an Axis declaration in support of the Arab national demands, in a joint or two identical documents. He appended to them the draft of such a declaration composed of five points: (1) Recognition of the full independence of the Arab countries, particularly those under French or British mandate or protectorate, and a commitment by the Axis Governments that they would not use juridical or other means to abridge this independence; (2) recognition of the Arab countries' right to unite; (3) recognition of the right of the Arab countries to solve the problem of the Jews living in Palestine or other Arab countries 'in a manner that conforms to the national and ethnic interests of the Arabs and to the solution of the Jewish question in the countries of Germany and Italy'; (4) a statement to the effect that Germany and Italy had no imperialistic designs with respect to

^{*} Grobba's notes, Berlin, August 27th, 1940—71/50692-8. The German Government received no letter to that effect.

[†] M. Khadduri, *Independent Iraq*, London, 1960, p. 164. Haddad does not recall this aspect of his Berlin conversations in his memoirs. See pp. 259–60 and 265–6.

Egypt and the Sudan; (5) an expression of sympathy for the Arab countries and of a desire for economic co-operation with them.*

In return for such a declaration Haddad promised in the name of his Government to renew diplomatic relations with Germany, to conclude an agreement with both Axis Powers on their exploitation of Iraq's natural resources—particularly oil—and to act as mediator between the Axis and other Arab states in reaching similar agreements. Nuri es-Said was to be removed from the Government and Naji Shawkat appointed in his place after the declaration had been made by the Axis and their agreement had been obtained on Iraq's propositions. An agreement was next to be reached on the details of mutual collaboration, with the negotiations taking place in Ankara. Following the Axis declaration of their independence, Syria, Palestine and Transjordan would announce their neutrality and rebellions would break out in the last two. According to Haddad's proposal, the uprisings were to be prepared in Syria with arms obtained from the French army stores under control of the cease-fire commission. One-third of the cost of the uprisings, estimated at £30,000 sterling per month, was to be covered by the Arab committee, and the rest divided equally between Germany and Italy. The rebels, maintained Haddad, would engage the activity of 30,000-40,000 British soldiers in Palestine. On the whole, the plan was quite simple: the Palestine uprising was to tie down large English forces, while Iraq would disrupt the transit of troops from India, with the result that the military situation in the Western Desert would turn in Italy's favour. But the condition for the organization of an uprising in Palestine would be the prior proclamation of Syria's independence and the setting up of an independent government there. As can be gathered, the conviction that the defeat of France provided the Axis with decisive influence on the Syrian situation lay at the foundation of Haddad's plans. And the utilisation of the opportunity in the interests of the Arabs was the central aim of the Pan-Arabists.

During his talks with von Papen at Tarabya, Naji Shawkat also demanded a declaration spelling out the aims of the Axis Powers in the Arab East and offered similar concessions in return.³⁵

The Nazi politicians, of course, did not conceal their satisfaction at the anti-British positions taken up by their Arab wooers. Documentary evidence points to the fact that Auswärtiges Amt, at least, attached

* Text of the declaration draft—71/50699-700. English translation—DGFP, Series D, Vol. X, pp. 559-60. Haddad refers somewhat differently to the draft declaration in his memoirs (U.K. Haddad, op. cit., pp. 29-31). In particular he has a different formulation of the point relating to a Jewish national home: Germany regards the Jewish national home as an illegal creation and recognises the Arabs' right to resolve this question properly in accordance with Arab national aspirations.

real importance to the war operations in the Mediterranean and, in that connection, considered of no little significance the attitude of the Arab populations and the possibility of their fighting Great Britain. But in 1940 the Mediterranean was outside the practical range of interest of the Nazi political and military chiefs. After the collapse of France, Hitler hoped to end the war rapidly by forcing Britain to capitulate. The idea of an attack on the Soviet Union was becoming prevalent.* True, there were also other opinions. Jodl believed that the strategy of indirect rather than a head-on attack should be applied against Great Britain. He considered that the most effective blow against England would be to close up the Mediterranean at Suez and Gibraltar and he proposed that the Abwehr should concern itself with the Arab countries. 36 But these views of some military chiefs did not prevail. In his letter to Mussolini of July 13th, Hitler referred rather coolly to Italy's plans for an attack on Egypt and the Suez Canal. But at the conference—which has become famous—of July 31st held at the Berghof, where Hitler formulated the intention of attacking the U.S.S.R. in the spring of 1941, the Army High Command proposed to send an armoured force to Libya.³⁷ And the German staffs held conferences in August and September on this question.³⁸ But Brauchitsch believed at the time that the Führer did not know what he wanted in North Africa.39 Hitler's immediate target was the British Isles, and the Mediterranean, as an arena of active war operations, occupied little place in his conceptions. Even later, when the Germans joined the fighting in the Western Desert, they considered it a minor war front.

Their war plans thus hindered the Nazi leaders from undertaking broad commitments to the Arabs. The direct advantages from a declaration supporting Arab demands seemed to be limited. But the Reich was concerned with re-establishing diplomatic relations with Iraq, with maintaining her complete neutrality and preventing her from discharging her obligations to England, which arose from the 1930 treaty. If followed by the Iraqi Government, such a policy would have repercussions in other Arab countries and would influence the position of Turkey, who might feel compelled to revise her relations with Great Britain as a result of a changed situation in neighbouring Iraq. But the Germans gathered from their talks with

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^{*} There is a wide literature on the question of when the attack on the U.S.S.R. was conceived. Among the best-known sources are Halder's notes in his war diary of July 31st, 1940. Enno von Rintelen in his *Mussolini als Bundesgenosse* (Mussolini as Ally) (Tübingen and Stuttgart, 1951, p. 51) claims that Hitler's adjutant, General Schmundt, told him in 1942 that Hitler ordered him in July, 1940 to find a proper place for his headquarters ('Wolfschanze'), from which he aimed to direct war operations against the U.S.S.R. (See also the splendid study of G. L. Weinberg, *Germany and the Soviet Union 1939–1941*, Leyden, 1954.)

Haddad that the Iraqi politicians preferred to postpone such measures, out of fear of London's reaction, to a time when Iraq would be in a position to resist with the help of a German army. The Germans also showed interest in a Palestine insurrection which, as Haddad emphasised, could only be organised from Syria.⁴² But real power in Syria was in the hands of the French, despite the Italian cease-fire commission which operated there. And the French, the Germans feared, might go over to the side of Great Britain or to de Gaulle. Berlin was evidently unaware of England's desperate military weakness in the Arab countries after the fall of France and the large-scale support of Vichy by the French troops in that region.

Hence, if the Germans were nevertheless inclined at least partly to consider Arab demands, this was not only due to the general tendency to support all movements directed against Great Britain. It also reflected certain long-range plans for Iraq. In their conversations with Haddad the Germans did not conceal their interest in Iraq's natural resources, especially oil.⁴³ Von Papen, for instance, emphasised that the Arab question was of great importance for Germany from the viewpoint of the postwar relation of forces. As he wrote on October 3rd:⁴⁴

Italy's hegemony in the Mediterranean—that is the absolute control of the maritime route through the Suez Canal to our Central African possessions, which are to be regained, as well as to the oil deposits in the Near East—makes it appear imperative that the Reich should secure at least one land connection to the Persian Gulf independent of this maritime route.

Von Papen also pointed to Germany's interest in Turkey, and stressed that if her territory was hedged in on all sides by Italy, Turkey would be driven into the arms of the Soviet Union. He expressed the view that an attempt must be made to open up land routes via the Balkans and Turkey to the Persian Gulf and to maintain friendly relations with the Arab countries.

THE ITALIAN VIEWPOINT AND THE OCTOBER 23RD, 1940, DECLARATION

In all these considerations the Germans had to reckon with Italy's far-reaching expansionist plans for the Mediterranean.

During their meeting with Hitler and Ribbentrop at Munich on June 19th, 1940, Mussolini and Ciano put in claims for Nice, Corsica and French Somalia, for extending Tunisia's borders at the expense of Algeria, and for Malta, and they demanded as well the demilitarisation of all British bases. The Fascist rulers further re-

quested the same rights and privileges in Egypt and the Sudan as enjoyed by the British and demanded an Atlantic port in Morocco and the ceding of Gibraltar to Spain. The Germans accepted these demands without any definite commitments, taking exception only to the provisions for Algeria and Morocco. 45 During his visit to Berlin on July 7th, Ciano did not raise the question of Algeria and Morocco, but he supplemented the list of Italian demands: strategic bases in Syria, Palestine and Transjordan; the taking over of British Somalia, Equatorial Africa up to Lake Chad, Djibuti, Perim and Sokotra, as well as Greek Corfu and Northern Epirus (Ciamuria), with Cyprus restored to Greece as compensation. 46 Italy's demands thus amounted to Rome's undivided rule over the Near East, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Red Sea. Hitler refused to be involved in a discussion of Italy's wishes and limited himself to the general statement that the Mediterranean and Adriatic had from ancient times belonged to the historical sphere of influence of the Apennine Peninsula. The German Government also gave silent assent to Italy's pretensions in the Red Sea area.⁴⁷ It may be worth noting that somewhat later Italy tried also to obtain Soviet approval of her ambitions in the Mediterranean and adjoining areas.

In 1940 Hitler had special reasons for the policy of refraining from undertaking any concrete obligations towards Italy. For he reckoned on a negotiated peace with England and wanted to retain freedom of manoeuvre. It is apparent, however, from Wilhelmstrasse documents that Germany decided to respect her ally's views, and at any rate did not contemplate acting openly against them.

Italy held in 1940 many trumps in her relations with Germany. First of all, there were considerable Italian armed forces in North Africa which had not suffered any serious defeats up till then.* Because of their mutual dislike of conducting the war jointly there was little possibility in 1940 of the military collaboration of the two

^{*} Early in 1940 there were ten Italian divisions in Libya, to which five were to be added (Rintelen, op. cit., p. 84). At the beginning of June 1940 Italy's land forces in Libya were estimated at nine regular divisions (of some 13,000 men each), three 'blackshirt' divisions and two divisions of Libyans (of 8,000 men each), besides other native units and border-guard formations. The Italian air force in Libya and the Dodecanese Islands numbered 313 aircraft and in East Africa 325 aeroplanes (I.S.O. Playfair, *The Mediterranean and the Middle East*, Vol. I, London, HMSO, 1954, pp. 92–96). In total, Italian troops amounted to 220,000 plus 80,000 native soldiers in Libya and 200,000 in East Africa. American envoy Fish considered Italy to be superior to England on land and in the air, in men and equipment. Great Britain had no more than 90,000 troops in Egypt and the Sudan (Fish to the Secretary of State, Cairo, October 9th, 1940—FRUS, op. cit., p. 476). Some German officers, however, considered the Italians to be stronger numerically but inferior in combat to the British forces (Halder, *Kriegstagebuch* (War Diary), Vol. II, Stuttgart, 1963, p. 38).

allies.* Mussolini's proposal that Italian soldiers should participate in the attack on England was rejected by Hitler, who, at the same time, suggested that Germany should aid Italy in bombarding Suez.⁴⁸ This in turn did not meet with Italy's approval. As mentioned above, OKH (High Command of the land forces) proposed to Hitler that an armoured corps be sent to Africa, and he agreed to forward a small detachment and an armoured brigade. But Italy opposed, in general, the presence of German forces in Libya and demanded tanks instead. During their meeting at the Brenner Pass on October 4th Mussolini finally agreed to the participation of German armoured and air forces in the Western Desert campaign, but the Italian command changed their minds on this in November.⁴⁹

Germany's attitude to the Italian demands was already expressed in the organisational measures of the armistice treaty concluded with France. The control commissions established in the Levant countries. in Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and French Somaliland, were Italian in composition and were subordinated to the Turin armistice commission; whereas matters relating to France itself were under the jurisdiction of the German armistice commission at Wiesbaden. This may be considered as an indication of the future spheres of influence. But this was a preliminary and imprecise division, especially in relation to Africa. And it was agreed in writing that the drawing up of the control zones in no way signified the delimitation of the political or economic spheres of influence. Actually, the Italian control commissions did not acquire much influence, and the little they had declined as a result of the further development of the war. The more important questions of North Africa and the Levant were settled with the Vichy delegation at Wiesbaden and then referred to Turin for Italy's approval. German emissaries began to make their appearance in North Africa in the spring of 1941.50

In accordance with Germany's general standpoint, von Papen stated to Naji Shawkat early in July 1940 that the further development of the political situation in the Near East was primarily the concern of the Italian Government. And Woermann, director of the political department of Auswärtiges Amt, wrote in his memorandum of July 21st, 1940,⁵¹ that Italy must have absolute precedence in organising the Arabian area and 'this consequently rules out any German claim to leadership in the Arabian area, or a division of that claim with Italy'. In relation to the Arabs' anti-Italian attitudes, he advised against arousing any hopes that it could meet with German support. He considered that the Arab countries were of interest to Germany

^{*} Enno von Rintelen, German's representative on the Italian High Command, often complained in his memoirs that each of the Axis partners conducted a separate war.

mainly from an economic viewpoint, especially in relation to Iraqi oil and airlines. In this connection, Woermann proposed to resume diplomatic relations with Iraq, but he did not expect to succeed. He advised organising the heavy anti-British but restrained anti-French propaganda. This position was confirmed by an Auswärtiges Amt circular letter on August 20th.⁵²

A political declaration of as broad a range as demanded by the Arab politicians would have been contrary to the above viewpoints. This was expressed by von Weizsäcker as follows: 'As long as we are still in the war', is his handwritten comment on Woermann's note, 'we should tell the Arabs only what we are fighting against, namely England, and only speak of the "liberation of the Arab world" without detailed reference to any goals for the future.'53 Ribbentrop's deputy thus wanted to maintain contact with the Arab leaders, but without making any commitments. It should not be forgotten that the Germans then counted on the rapid conclusion of the war in the west, and they therefore apparently considered that far-reaching commitments to the Arabs would tie their hands, not only with respect to their Italian ally, but also towards France and Great Britain.

But the Mufti, Rashid Ali and their adherents did not cease in their efforts. After his conversation with Naji Shawkat, von Papen asked Berlin to take a position on the matter of the declaration.⁵⁴ At the beginning of September, when the air raids over England were stepped up, the battle of Libya could be expected to erupt at any time. Mussolini ordered an offensive on September 7th without waiting for a German landing in the British Isles.⁵⁵ On the 13th the Italians reached Sidi Barrani, just across the western border of Egypt. But the Italians could not manage to profit from England's weakness in the Near East at the time. And soon after Hitler gave up operation 'Sea Lion' for 1940. Count Ciano was informed of this on September 27th and Keitel communicated it to the Italian Comando Supremo at the beginning of October.⁵⁶ The war clearly began to drag out.

As mentioned above, Hajj Amin's private secretary arrived in Berlin in August. Because of the proximity of war operations on the Libyan front where, in the opinion of military circles, German troops were to participate, the Nazis were inclined to expand their activity in the Arab countries. This was why Weizsäcker turned to Rome with the information that the Reich Government regarded Haddad's proposals positively. 'That is', he stated, 'it would in certain circumstances be prepared to help [the Arabs] with captured arms and money, but it would proceed only in agreement with Italy.' Hence, Ambassador von Mackensen ought to make it clear, he continued,

how Count Ciano regards co-operation with the Arabs in general, and the chances of Haddad's proposals in particular. The whole matter should be kept in complete secrecy from the Iraqi Legation in Rome, which is connected with the pro-British Nuri Said.⁵⁷

Von Mackensen presented Weizsäcker's proposition to Count Ciano on September 10th and met with a very cold reaction. Italy's Foreign Minister stated that he had been in constant touch with the Mufti for years, of which his secret funds could tell the tale. The return on 'this gift of millions' had been negligible, he complained, amounting to some acts of sabotage on the oil pipeline running from Iraq to Mediterranean ports and that the occasional damage done by Arab guerillas was easy to repair. Ciano nevertheless promised to study the propositions.⁵⁸

On September 11th the Palazzo Chigi drafted a memorandum to the effect that a public declaration favouring the complete and unlimited independence of the Arab countries and their right to unification was not desirable. For, it said, the Arab states would be in no position to defend their independence and would be sure to fall under the domination of other powers. Nor were any important advantages to be expected from Arab co-operation, since Iraq was neither in a position to organise a serious uprising in the Arab countries, nor to defend her own neutrality. It was hence unnecessary to go beyond a verbal declaration and the financial support of the Mufti.⁵⁹

Another conversation took place between the Reich Ambassador and Count Ciano on the afternoon of September 14th, with the participation of Dino Alfieri. Von Mackensen had already been informed of von Papen's conversation with Naji Shawkat. 60 The latter had made Germany's adherence to the written Italian declaration on the independence of Iraq, Transjordan, Palestine and Syria the condition for the removal of Nuri Said from the Government and for the organisation of an uprising in Palestine.

But Ciano denied that Italy had made any such declaration in writing. Italy, claimed Mussolini's son-in-law, was interested in something entirely different. The Italian envoy at Baghdad confirmed in June and July what Radio Bari had broadcast many times, namely, that Italy was interested in the Arab states maintaining or winning their independence, with their territorial integrity left intact by the British. There was no question of any binding statements, let alone written ones, assured Ciano.

But Italy was ready to meet Germany's wishes in the matter, he maintained. He considered it advantageous to comply with some of the Arab demands, naturally falling short of their desires. Italy had spent millions on the Mufti, he complained, without any notable results to speak of.⁶¹ Only in October did the Italian officials admit

that Gabrielli had made a written declaration on Italian policy in the Arab countries, but they claimed that he had done so without instructions.*

In short, Ciano did not expect much from co-operation with the Baghdad politicians, but he was ready to lend them certain support and to give general consideration to the Arab demands in the Axis propaganda. He even made reference to some vague declaration. The tone of his pronouncements indicated that he was far from pleased at Germany's interest in Arab affairs, and her initiative. The Italians wanted in general to belittle the significance of a declaration.† The following verbal declaration of their attitude to Arab postulates was agreed to finally:

Germany (Italy) which has always been animated by sentiments of friendship for the Arabs and cherishes the wish that they may prosper and be happy, and assume a place among the peoples of the earth in accordance with their historic and natural importance, has always watched with interest the struggles of the Arab countries to achieve their independence. In their effort to obtain this goal the Arab countries can count upon Germany's (Italy's) full sympathy also in the future. In making this statement Germany (Italy) finds itself in full accord with her Italian (German) ally.⁶²

The preamble to this declaration, also read on the radio, stated that it was issued in order to counteract British propaganda, which libelled the Axis states, whom the Arabs regarded as their liberators. It should be noted that this declaration merely amounted to an expression of sympathy and that all the introductory statements were added in order 'to adapt the statement to oriental mentality'—to use Weizsäcker's expression.⁶³

It was not possible to conceal for long Italy's attitude to the Arab demands. Haddad was in contact with Naji Shawkat—then in Turkey—and with Kamel el-Kilani. The Italian Foreign Minister's denial of the existence of Gabrielli's written statement further undermined the Arabs' confidence in the Italians.⁶⁴ Rome's reservations to the declaration communicated in a fragmentary fashion to Haddad, for instance, in relation to the protection by a 'catholic country', i.e. Italy, of the Lebanese Maronites, once again served to accent her colonising aims not only in North Africa, but in the Arab East as well.⁶⁵ It was also difficult to conceal the negotiations going on

^{*} Mackensen to AA, Rome, October 2nd, 1940—DGFP, Series D, Vol. XI, London, 1961, pp. 238-9; Haddad, op. cit., pp. 40-44. Haddad adds that the Germans informed him on October 26th that the Italians had found in the files Gabrielli's written declaration of July 7th, 1940.

[†] Haddad, op. cit., pp. 47–48. Mackensen's despatch to AA of October 2nd (DGFP, loc. cit.) shows that the German and Italian Governments at first wanted Haddad to broadcast their joint declaration in Arabic.

between Germany, Italy and Japan on the division of spheres of influence, which resulted in the 'Tripartite Pact' signed on September 27th, 1940.66 Haddad took into account the fact that the German leaders recognised Italy's hegemony in the Arab countries.67 He communicated to Grobba, at the end of September, that the Arab chiefs might possibly consider alignment with the Soviet Union, for they would presumably attain greater independence as a Soviet Republic than they would under Italian subjection. 68 Unofficially the Germans most probably appeased Haddad by stressing that the Italo-German agreement on Rome's predominance in the Mediterranean was temporary, that the situation would change when the war was over and that Germany had no intention of giving up her projects and targets in the Arab lands. According to Haddad's memoirs, the Germans 'didn't miss one occasion to present him with such explanation', 69 and pointed to Italian dissatisfaction with the Reich's plans and activities in the East. 70

ARAB RESERVATIONS

On October 18th von Weizsäcker communicated the text of the declaration to the Mufti's private secretary, and von Papen was directed to submit a copy to the Iraqi Minister of Justice, 71 who returned to Baghdad on the 28th. 72 The declaration was broadcast in Arabic on the Rome and Berlin radios on the 23rd, but it did not appear in print. It was only at the beginning of December, when the Axis Powers, because of the general situation, grew more interested in taking some steps in the Arab countries, that it was published in the German and Italian press with appropriate comment. This happened after a further exchange of opinion between the German and Italian Governments. It turned out that the Germans were again less reluctant than the Italians to take measures on Arab matters. 73 On January 2nd, 1941, the Germans met the request of the Iraqi Government, as expressed by Kamel el-Kilani in a conversation with von Hentig, 74 and put on paper the declaration of October 23rd, 1940. 75

The Wilhelmstrasse considered it appropriate at that time to stress to King Ibn Saud their interest in Arab affairs. On November 30th Woermann addressed a letter to Khalid al-Hud, the King's adviser, in which it was again hinted that the Reich desired to send an envoy to Jidda.* Woermann declared that Germany had no desire to rule over the Arabs or to oppress them, in contradistinction to England, and that 'she had no intention of applying to the Arabs a different yardstick than to other nations'. In conclusion Woermann called

^{*} Text in 647/255162. This letter was sent through a certain Kasim Majid, probably a Saudi Arabian living in Germany.

THE DECLARATIONS OF OCT. 23RD/DEC. 5TH, 1940

attention to the joint Axis declaration and to that of the Italian envoy at Jidda.⁷⁶

The declaration was repeated many times over German and Italian radio stations and was published in many magazines, in Iraq as well, often with positive comments.⁷⁷ It also reached countries where the press was not able to disseminate it owing to the British war censorship. It aroused great interest and hope among the Arabs, but political leaders voiced many reservations. For still fresh in the memory of Arab nationalists were England's profuse promises, made during World War I in the effort to rouse the Arabs against Turkish domination, which she promptly betrayed once the war was over.

After acquainting himself with the text of the declaration, the Mufti's private secretary did not conceal his disillusionment. He stated in a conversation with von Weizsäcker that the Arabs expected more, namely recognition of their independence, and he asked why, if Germany really desired Arab independence, she did not say so openly. He pointed out that British propaganda could stigmatise the declaration as vague and full of reservations. In reply to Weizsäcker's explanation, Haddad recalled Arab experience with British promises during World War I, referring in particular to the Sykes-Picot agreement. He expressed the fear that a similar secret agreement might also exist at present between Germany and Italy. When von Weizsäcker denied the existence of such an agreement Haddad declared that he would like to see the declaration as the first step in mutual collaboration and that the further development of relations might be the subject of future negotiations between the German and Italian Ministers at Baghdad and the Iraqi Government. Weizsäcker accepted that interpretation and agreed that von Papen should notify Naji Shawkat in Ankara to that effect.⁷⁸

Khalid al-Hud, too, found loopholes in the declaration and had reservations about Germany's assurance that she did not want to rule the Arabs. He pointed out in reply to Woermann's letter that he would like to be sure also that Germany's allies did not intend, under some guise, to subjugate Arab territory.⁷⁹ It is not difficult to conjecture that the Tripolitanian had Italy in mind.

The extent of the reservations to the October 23rd declaration among the knowledgeable Arab politicians can be seen from the letter of a group of Beirut nationalists to the German Government (January 1941).⁸⁰ This group, which called itself the Arab National Committee of Beirut, emphasised that the principal Arab demand was to create a united Arab state in Asia, to be followed later on by further unification embracing Egypt in particular, and that the Arabs expected German support for these aims. With regard to the declaration, the Beirut group put the following questions: What did the

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Reich Government understand by 'independence'? Was it a matter of the independence of each Arab country separately, which was also recognised by the Allies, or did it mean the common independence of all Arabs in one uniform state? Was the expression 'independence', they asked, to be understood in the same way as the independence of Germany, or was it a matter of formal independence such as England granted the Arabs after World War I? In referring to Arabs did the Reich Government have in mind only those in West Asia, or also those of North Africa? They also wanted to know whether the Reich Government was ready to recognise an Arab state embracing Western Asia, while reserving the right to determine the destinies of other countries, Egypt in particular. They finally questioned whether Germany recognised the unity of the inhabitants of individual countries as being of Arab nationality or whether she accepted the thesis of the Western Powers regarding the decisiveness of racial and religious distinctions.⁸¹

Berlin, of course, could only make vague replies, if it was not to be completely contrary to Arab nationalist aspirations. But the Germans never did reply to the above questions. They felt neither need nor desire to make their position more precise at the time. As far as Italy was concerned, she clearly had an appetite for political and economic expansion and colonisation of the Mediterranean, and that, of course, determined her position as regard the Arab demands.

Having procured the declaration, Haddad completed his mission at Berlin and proceeded to Rome.⁸² There he raised primarily the question of financial assistance and of arms for the Arab nationalists in Palestine.⁸³ He at first expected to wait for an answer from Italian officials, but with the outbreak of the Italo-Greek War (October 28th, 1940) he quickly returned to Baghdad.⁸⁴

It must be said in summary that the declaration of October 23rd was not the consequence of any definite or actual political or military Axis plans for the Arab states. In making the declaration Germany and Italy were guided primarily by the general requirements of anti-British propaganda. The war clearly had begun to drag out and North Africa had become an active theatre of operations. The Axis Powers therefore did not think it wise to disappoint their Arab adherents. Besides, it was a matter of facilitating the functioning of German intelligence and diversive agents in the Arab world.*

* Haddad was to receive a letter from Ribbentrop addressed to the Mufti with a warning that the Arab committee at Baghdad should not take any premature steps. It also carried a promise that the Reich Government would do everything to aid Iraq in the event of a war against England breaking out there (Khadduri, op. cit., p. 188). However, the present writer did not come across this letter. Nor is there any confirmation of it in Haddad's memoirs.

VI

IRAQ ON THE EVE OF REBELLION



HE issue of the declaration on October 23rd and its reiteration on December 5th corresponded with important developments in the Mediterranean theatre of war operations.

GERMAN PLANS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

At the end of October, when Hitler had abandoned the idea of invading the British Isles and was unable to begin the war against the Soviet Union so late in the year, he turned to the possibility of war operations in the Mediterranean. As long as he expected a victory over England Hitler did not pay much attention to the area where the Italians were supposed to operate. It was when the possibility of a direct invasion and destruction of her rival across the Channel began to decline that Germany began to elaborate plans to attack British positions in the Mediterranean. In the middle of October the German Naval Command considered that an offensive against Alexandria and the Suez Canal and the development of the situation in the Mediterranean in general, might determine the outcome of the war. What is more, the War Admiralty stressed that it was not sufficient to control the western part of that sea, but that strategic and economic considerations dictated the necessity of also dominating its eastern shores.² Raeder is reported to have told Hitler as early as September 26th, that Suez must be taken with the active participation of German troops.3 The same opinion prevailed in the High Command of the land forces. Heusinger, Paulus and Gehlen thought that German participation in the Libyan campaign had to be concerted with the capture of Crete and with military operations in the direction of Bulgaria, Turkey and Syria; 4 that is with an advance on Suez from the north. And on November 2nd, 1940, General Halder composed a memorandum for Hitler in which he advocated this line of action.

Two motorised army corps were regarded as necessary for this operation, which, according to Halder, would take six months, and according to Paulus, three. Two German armoured and one motorised division, as well as a large number of specialised detachments, had to be employed in Libya.⁵

Though Hitler did not accept these views, he seems to have been to a certain extent influenced by them. It does appear that the above strategic plan was regarded very seriously in the period between the lost 'battle for Britain' and the attack on the Soviet Union.

The above views influenced the decision to aid Italy in the Eastern Mediterranean. Thus, on September 14th Hitler ordered intensified efforts to send an armoured corps to Libya. 6 But as mentioned above, Mussolini was not inclined at the time to accept German aid, considering that it would be desirable first to capture Marsa Matruh, which he thought would be soon achieved. Shortly before Italy's invasion of Greece, General Thoma reported on the situation in Libya. It was not encouraging. What was more, Thoma also emphasised that Italy did not want German aid.7 The Germans, too, had doubts about their ability to render Italy prompt assistance. Thoma, Paulus and Heusinger expressed the view on October 24th that if they expected German help the Italians would wait to capture Marsa Matruh until the arrival of German troops.8 The same opinion was held by Halder in his memorandum of November 2nd, and on November 4th Hitler said that the Italian Command wanted to use the Germans as a 'blood sacrifice'.9

Various causes thus contributed to the triumph of the view in the German Command that there was no sense in shipping German troops to Libya, at any rate not before the capture of Marsa Matruh.¹⁰ Hitler then began to consider conducting war operations in the Western Mediterranean—first with Gibraltar as the main target—and then following up with the conquest of the western part of the North African coast. If successful, the Mediterranean would cease to be a British communications artery and the destruction of all Britain's Mediterranean bases would be facilitated.

Hitler discussed the implementation of these conceptions with Franco at Hendaye (October 23rd, 1940) and with Pétain and Laval at Montoire (October 24th, 1940). A special Wirtschaftsstab Afrika¹¹ was established by Wi Rü Amt (office of the arms economy). On November 12th Hitler issued directive 18 on the close co-operation of Germany with Vichy France against England, especially in France's North African possessions and on conducting the joint operation 'Felix' with Spain for the purpose of taking Gibraltar and expelling Britain's forces from the Western Mediterranean. The directive also called for extending aid to Italy in the undefined but

rather near future.¹² Thus Germany was to act in the Mediterranean according to the wishes of the military, but the centre of gravity of the operation in the winter and spring of 1940–41 was to be the western part of that region.

However, the negotiations at Hendaye and Montoire yielded no definite results and all the hopes aroused in the Nazi leadership in October were dissipated in December. Early in that month the Spanish dictator not only refused to participate, but even declined to approve of a German attack on Gibraltar. And one of the most dramatic episodes in the history of conquered France occurred on December 13th: Pétain dropped Laval from the Government. This was interpreted in Berlin—and to some extent correctly—as a blow to the policy of broad collaboration initiated at Montoire, and hence directed against using French North Africa in Hitler's war plans.

Without the participation of the Vichy and Franco Governments German action in the Western Mediterranean would prove unusually difficult.

Frustration in the Western Mediterranean dictated the alternative possibility of closing this sea artery from the east, from the direction of the Suez Canal.¹³ Besides, developments in the Eastern Mediterranean compelled Nazi political and military attention to be shifted there.

Mussolini invaded Greece on October 28th, 1940, but the course of the fighting developed very unfavourably for Italy. The Italian troops suffered enormous losses and the Greeks not only checked the invader but even crossed the Albanian border. On the night of November 11th/12th British aircraft, based on the carrier *Illustrious*, attacked the Italian naval war base at Taranto and torpedoed a number of warships. This attack changed the relation of naval forces in the Mediterranean in favour of Great Britain.¹⁴

According to Hitler's personal letter to Mussolini (of November 20th) he felt very keenly about the disaster suffered by his ally. He saw in it a blow at the Axis prestige and expressed his apprehension that the Greek campaign would enable England to acquire air bases there from which to attack the Rumanian oilfields, Albanian ports and Southern Italy. In order to avert this danger the Führer proposed to conquer Gibraltar (which soon became an impossible task) and to capture Marsa Matruh and build an air base there from which to bombard Alexandria as well as to mine the Suez Canal. The closing of Suez to traffic was to be the most important military measure, while the invasion of Egypt was to be postponed till the autumn of the following year. The Mediterranean problem, wrote Hitler, could be solved that winter by using German forces, but on the condition that they be returned not later than May 1st, 1941.¹⁵

Later on Hitler decided to send German troops to Greece in the spring of 1941. But he did not change his plan for operations in the direction of Egypt, limited to the capture of Marsa Matruh and to the subsequent aerial activity. Hitler said to Brauchitsch, Halder and Brand on December 5th that Libya was no longer of any military importance to Germany.*

The letter to Mussolini suggests that Hitler considered a campaign in the Mediterranean and an invasion of the U.S.S.R. as two successive and to an extent supplementary phases of the war. For how else can be interpreted the two dates Hitler used in that letter: May 1st, 1941, and the autumn of 1941? The order issued later on operation 'Barbarossa' provided for the attack on the U.S.S.R. to start in May 1941. It is known, too, that the Nazi plans called for this operation to be concluded in the autumn of that year. It therefore appears that at the end of November and beginning of December 1940, Hitler expected the Axis troops to occupy the Balkans by the spring of 1941, paralyse the Suez Canal and conquer Gibraltar with the aid of Spain, and then to invade the U.S.S.R. With the conclusion of operation 'Barbarossa' the question of the Mediterranean would finally be settled by the invasion of Egypt and the occupation of the British-dominated territories. 16

ITALY'S DEFEATS AND DIRECTIVE 22

Hitler's plans collapsed in the first stage of their implementation. The Italian offensive, launched on September 13th, 1940, brought no results despite Britain's weakness in Egypt. Churchill informed the Commons on September 5th, 1940, of the decision to send strong reinforcements to the Middle East from England, then seriously threatened by a German invasion.¹⁷ On December 9th, 1940, General Archibald Wavell, Commander of the British Middle East forces, attacked the Italian army at the border of Egypt. Within a week the Italian forces were expelled from Egyptian territory and dislodged from Sollum and Bardia. By February Marshal Graziani's forces were destroyed: nineteen generals and 130,000 troops were captured and only 7,000 avoided that fate. Cyrenaica was in British hands. England's Mediterranean positions, which Hitler wanted to destroy in the winter of 1940-1, were strongly held. Considerable opinion in Italy, including Graziani, expected the complete loss of their North African possessions.

The catastrophic defeat in North Africa shocked Hitler and con-

^{*} Halder, Kriegstagebuch (War Diary), Vol. II, Stuttgart, 1963, p. 209. But it must be considered that Hitler still counted then on carrying out operation 'Felix' with Franco's help at the latest on January 10th, 1941.

tributed to a great extent to the cancellation of the plans he had disclosed in his November 20th letter. It was no longer a matter of German aid in a victorious offensive, but of reversing the effects of the catastrophe. In December Italy appealed for German aid against Greece, as well as for weapons and raw materials, including additional coal deliveries. From that time on the unequal relationship between the two Axis partners became increasingly marked. The Reich acceded to the requests, but demanded Italian workers for German industry and control over the use of its aid. From then on German economic experts, Gestapo agents and military intelligence operatives began to occupy key positions in Italy. 19

There was a change, too, in the relations between the two partners in North Africa itself. In measure with the appearance of weaknesses and failures in the Italian forces,' Jodl was to say later, 'North Africa became ever more a German battlefield.'20 The events of the winter of 1940–1 started this process.

It was decided as late as November 15th, during the Keitel-Badoglio meeting,²¹ to postpone further consideration of the participation of German troops in African operations until the capture of Marsa Matruh. Graziani's defeat at the beginning of December did not cause any change in this decision at first.²² It was only when Badoglio resigned and Count Ugo Cavallero—advocate of the closest possible alliance with Germany-became Chief of the General Staff that the Comando Supremo asked for immediate aid in Libya (December 19th). The Italians at the same time wanted arms and equipment for ten divisions and raw materials for their war industry. Germany was to send an armoured division to North Africa without delay.23 For, though Britain's army on the Nile was numerically much weaker than the Italian forces, it was motorised and composed of strong armoured forces. At the beginning of January the Italians renewed their request for a German armoured unit to be sent to Libva.24

Hitler assured Mussolini in a letter on the 31st of December that Italy would get Germany's full support.²⁵ In a conference with his military commanders on January 8th–9th, 1941, Hitler pointed out the necessity of at all costs averting the collapse of the Italian positions and indicated that he was sending strong German forces to North Africa and Greece for that purpose.²⁶ Directive 22, issued on January 11th, proclaimed that Germany must come to Italy's aid because of strategic, political and psychological considerations. The first objective of this aid was to retain Tripolitania. The directive provided for a German blocking formation (*Sperrverband*) to go to Africa about February 20th in order to help the Italians combat the British armoured forces. The most important task of Fliegerkorps

X (to be transferred from Norway to Sicily according to the directive) was to combat British sea forces and to cut connections between the Western and Eastern Mediterranean. From bases in Tripoli the Luftwaffe was to attack the ports and unloading harbours on the coasts of Egypt and Cyrenaica.* It was considered a purely defensive operation and the Germans wanted to use small forces. These decisions were confirmed at a meeting of Hitler and Mussolini at Obersalzberg on January 19th–20th. The idea behind the German Command was that the Italians would not hold Cyrenaica, but that there was no fear for Tripolitania, since all larger war operations came to a halt there in May owing to the great heat.²⁷ Reports soon came from North Africa that the assigned German forces were insufficient in the new situation.²⁸ Hitler and his generals considered it very important to hold the African front, for they feared that a final Italian collapse would enable the British to use their forces on other battlefields.²⁹

Tobruk, Italy's overseas coastal fortress, fell on January 22nd. The Italians had hoped that its garrison would hold out and prevent the British from advancing on Benghazi and Agedabia. At a conference on February 3rd with the High Command Hitler found it necessary to change his previous conceptions and stated that it was necessary to send an armoured division to Africa instead of a blocking unit. He had to overrule Brauchitsch's view that it was not desirable to send additional German forces to Libya. On January 27th the Commander-in-Chief of the land forces said to Hitler that 'Barbarossa cannot be damaged any further'. And he declared at the conference of February 3rd: 'In the final account they [the armoured troops to be sent to Libya] will be missed in Barbarossa.'31

Together with the previously designated 5th Light Motorised Division the 15th Armoured Division was to constitute the *Deutsches Afrika-Korps*. Mussolini was informed of this decision on February 5th. An order was issued the next day to carry out operation *Sonnen-blume* ('Sunflower'), the code name for the shipment of German troops to North Africa. Hitler appointed General Erwin Rommel commander of the African corps. In a conversation on February 7th the Führer entrusted him with a very limited but politically very important task.³² He had to prevent the loss of Italy's North African colonies, which would otherwise prove fatal to his ally's morale. It was unconditionally necessary to prevent British troops from approaching the borders of the French possessions under the control

^{*} The text of directive 22 is given by W. Hubatsch, Hitlers Weisungen für die Kriegsführung 1939–1945 (Hitler's Directives for the Conduct of the War 1939–1945), Frankfurt a/M, 1962, pp. 93–95. OKW decided (January 21st) to advance the date of the transport of German troops to North Africa from February 20th to the 15th (ibid., pp. 96–97).

of General Weygand, whom Hitler suspected of being in touch with Great Britain. It was then necessary to launch a counter-offensive. Rommel was to command the motorised troops of both Germany and Italy under the Italian High Command of the North African front. But the air force was to be under complete German command, headed by General Fröhlich as Fliegerführer Afrika.

Another aim of this campaign was to allow the German air force more elbow-room for operations in North Africa.³³

When the first German transports landed in Tripoli (Libya) the situation of the Italian forces was desperate in North Africa and critical in Greece. A change came only in the spring, when Rommel assumed the desert offensive and when the Germans launched operation 'Marita' in the Balkans.

SITUATION IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES

When the Germans decided to join the fighting in the Eastern Mediterranean they had, of necessity, to take greater interest in the Arab countries. And the Third Reich had a good opportunity to shape the destinies of these countries.

Things seemed to be peaceful in Egypt, but there was no let-up in the conflicts within the ruling coterie on Egypt's position on the war. An officers' conspiracy of a clearly anti-British character emerged at this time and became the germ of the 'free officers' movement which took power in 1952. Its patron was Aziz Ali el-Masri, an almost legendary figure in the Arab nationalist movement. After the June 1940 events the country was rather quiet, although the conspirators planned an anti-British uprising in November. After the British victories and Italian weakness in the winter of 1940–1, the situation stabilised, and the flow of troops from the whole British Empire guaranteed peace.

Peace also reigned in Saudi Arabia. The war developments found a weak echo here and the ruling circles exhibited complete reserve towards the war. The development of the British offensive in East Africa at the beginning of 1941, the liquidation of Italy's colonial empire in the spring of that year, and the control of the Red Sea by the English fleet—all helped to prevent the Saudis abandoning the watchful, waiting attitude.

At least on the surface, the situation was calm in Palestine, too. The Arab national movement was at this time without leadership and the presence of numerous imperial troops prevented any violent clashes. True, opposition sentiment grew at this time because of high prices and unemployment, but these economic difficulties had also another effect—they kept the inhabitants occupied with their daily cares. Overwhelmed by apathy, the Arab population failed

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to react to the agitation for renewing the rebellion carried on by the emissaries of the Mufti, while the Nashashibi Clan and the Left openly opposed the revival of the armed struggle. The Jewish population co-operated with the mandatory in everything relating to the war and attempted to maintain some kind of armistice on internal matters. But this policy was interrupted from time to time by discontent and protests against one or another Government measure.

A wait-and-see attitude prevailed in Syria. But the imminence of disturbances could be felt in the air. At the end of August an Italian commission arrived at Beirut to control the fulfilment of the armistice agreement. French High Commissioner Puaux was removed at the end of November, evidently because he was dissatisfied with the policies of the Vichy Government. In his place was appointed the well-known reactionary and German collaborationist Chiappe, ex-Police Prefect of Paris. But he was shot by mistake by the Italians while in flight to Syria. Henri Dentz then became High Commissioner and arrived in Syria on December 29th, 1940. Neither Puaux—who later joined Free France—nor Dentz were with de Gaulle, and the French administration recognised the authority of the Vichy Government.

The collapse of France brought no change in the status of the Syrian or Lebanese people. There was not even any talk of constitutional reform, while the Italian control commission had no intention of supporting Arab political demands.

It was generally maintained that the members of the Italian commission in Syria behaved correctly towards the Government and that Italian propaganda was of little significance.35 The Italians pursued a policy of not weakening the French forces in Syria, because they thought it wise to let the French Government carry the responsibility for the difficult situation.³⁶ When members of the nationalist, pro-Fascist National Party of Syria tried to get Italian support for their activity they met with a negative reply,³⁷ because Rome wanted to colonise the countries of the Middle East and hence had no desire to promote the growth of Arab independence. German agents and observers reported the prevalence of disillusionment among the Arabs and the fear that Germany would leave the Levant countries to Italy. There was a noticeable rise on this basis of British influence in Syria and Lebanon, since Great Britain was, after all, more highly regarded by the Arabs than was Italy, and the anti-Italian feelings outweighed the mistrust of Britain.38 The economic situation, too, favoured England. After the fall of France, Syria was detached from the Middle East region dominated by Great Britain. In time of war this led to difficulties, particularly with food supplies.

Arab nationalists naturally wanted to make use of France's weakness to attain their aims. With Germany scoring success after success in Europe and with Berlin propaganda encouraging nationalist activity, the situation seemed favourable. At the same time the cost of living was rising and there was a shortage of articles of prime necessity: kerosene, bread and sugar. And this was the background for mass anti-Government demonstrations, which turned into riots at the beginning of 1941. Repressions by the French authorities did not prevent new disturbances at the end of February. This time police repression led to a general strike. Early in March the price of bread increased by 50 per cent and that, of course, intensified the discontent. The National Bloc, led by Shukri el-Quwatli, placed itself at the head of the movement against the Government. Unrest swept also the cities of Lebanon. General Dentz had to make some concessions and the Governments established after suspension of the Syrian and Lebanese Constitutions were compelled to resign. New Cabinets were formed at the beginning of April. Khaled el-Azm became head of the Government in Syria and Alfred Naggash in Lebanon.

But the concessions were formal; real power remained in the hands of the French. The leaders of the National Bloc and other prominent nationalist politicians were kept out of the Government.³⁹ It can be easily conjectured that the anti-French demonstrations in the Levant incidentally benefited Great Britain, but were not convenient for the Axis, although German and Italian radio propaganda fell on fertile soil here, as in the other Arab countries. In conversations with Arab leaders German representatives made it abundantly clear that they did not want any disturbances in Syria.⁴⁰

From the standpoint of Great Britain, Syria and Lebanon constituted a potential danger to her positions in the Middle East. For in the event of closer co-operation between the Axis and the Vichy Government, Hitler could attack the Suez Canal from the north through Syria and Palestine.⁴¹ London took this danger into account and the officers commanding the imperial forces in the Middle East devoted much attention to it. ⁴² When the Vichy Government left the League of Nations in the spring of 1941 rumours multiplied regarding the assignment of part of the Levant to Germany.⁴³ The Germans had their own fears for Syria: frequent rumours of a coming British invasion of Syria disturbed Auswärtiges Amt⁴⁴ and Hitler shared its apprehension.⁴⁵

POLITICAL STRIFE IN IRAQ

Great Britain faced serious difficulties in Iraq. The Rashid Ali el-Kilani Government refused to allow the concentration of British

troops in the country or to sever diplomatic relations with Italy. There were rumours besides that the Iraqi Government was considering the renewal of diplomatic relations with Germany. In October 1940 German troops entered Rumania, Italy attacked Greece, and both Fascist states issued a declaration assuring the Arabs of their sympathy and support of their aspirations. And the language of the Iraqi press towards England was becoming more hostile.⁴⁶

Until then Great Britain operated in Iraq through faithful native politicians. But on the proposals of General Wavell and the Chiefs of Staff, the War Cabinet on November 7th, 1940, decided to apply direct financial and economic pressure. It was at the same time resolved to send a mission to Iraq to be headed by a personality well known and highly regarded there. 47 On the basis of instructions from London, the British Ambassador, Sir Basil Newton, warned the Iraqi Government that Britain would be compelled to revise her attitude if Iraq re-established relations with Germany. When the Government denied any such intentions the British Ambassador declared that London had no confidence in Rashid Ali and that Iraq must choose between him and British friendship.* On November 29th the British Foreign Office confirmed the Ambassador's position and he held conversations with the Foreign Minister, Nuri es-Said, and the Regent, Prince Abd ul-Illah, in an attempt to organise active resistance to the Premier. The Ambassador complained that the British Government did not get the kind of co-operation it felt entitled to under the treaty and demanded Rashid Ali's removal.†

Sir Basil Newton accused Rashid Ali of re-establishing telegraphic communications with Germany and Italy, of responsibility for not severing diplomatic relations with Italy, of not prohibiting pro-German and anti-British press propaganda, of suppressing criticism of the Axis October 23rd, 1940, declaration, and of not denying rumours of his intention to renew diplomatic relations with Germany. The British Ambassador complained above all that Rashid Ali pursued a policy of neutrality and not of friendship with Great Britain and even avoided avowing in public Iraq's alliance with England. The British were of the opinion that the October declaration had been issued at the request of Rashid Ali and that telegraphic

^{*} Woermann's notes, Berlin, December 12th, 1940—83/61095. Woermann was informed by Kase of the Japanese embassy that Iraq had rejected Britain's demand for Rashid Ali's removal. (See Khadduri, op. cit., p. 194.)
† Woermann's notes, Berlin, December 11th, 1940—83/61093—4. Cosmelli of

[†] Woermann's notes, Berlin, December 11th, 1940—83/61093-4. Cosmelli of the Italian Embassy at Berlin provided Woermann with information on Iraq. (See Khadduri, loc. cit.)

communications had been re-established at the request of von Papen, relayed to Baghdad by Naji Shawkat.⁴⁸

Paul Knabenshue, American envoy at Baghdad, had a talk on November 5th with the Iraqi Premier and Foreign Minister, in the name of Cordell Hull, United States Secretary of State. He warned against Iraq's slackening of co-operation with Great Britain, spoke of adventurism on the part of the Iraqi Government, and emphasised that the U.S.A. was giving England all possible aid short of war and would continue to do so.⁴⁹ Turkey, too, tried to influence Iraq to fulfil her treaty obligations to Great Britain.⁵⁰ The Premier of Egypt then appealed to Rashid Ali not to establish relations with Germany.* As a means of pressure, the British denied Iraq any more arms supplies and cut off her allowance of dollars from the London-controlled pool of the sterling area,⁵¹ which, of course, heightened anti-British sentiment in the officers' corps.

The British Cabinet then turned to the U.S. with a request that she should prohibit and hinder all export of arms to Iraq and the American Government agreed.⁵²

Rashid Ali's reply to all approaches was that he had no hostile intentions towards Britain and he protested against intervention in Iraq's internal affairs.⁵³

Îraq's most eminent pro-British politician, General Nuri-pasha es-Said, filed a memorandum with the Premier; in which he pointed out that the British Empire was not in the least breaking up as had been assumed after the fall of France, and that it was well able to fight the Axis. He recalled the American aid to England and warned of the consequences—particularly from the U.S.A.—of Iraq's refusal to co-operate with England. Nuri-pasha pointed out further that co-operation with Britain and friendship with the United States carried the promise of the fulfilment of the Arab national aspirations, and those of the Palestinians in particular. He was of the opinion that the Russo-German Pact was unnatural and temporary, and that in the end the U.S.S.R. would fight alongside Britain against Germany.⁵⁴ He demanded a war declaration against Germany, the sending of two Iraqi divisions to Libya and the delegation of the Jerusalem Mufti to the United States to conduct propaganda for the Arab demands. 55 In an attempt to win over Iraq's army commanders Nuri tried to convince them that they would be the first officers of a regular Arab army to participate in a modern war, that they would be highly esteemed and adored by all Arabs. He wound up with a colourful

^{*} Rashid Ali informed the secretary of the Italian Baghdad legation of this on January 20th, 1941 (Woermann's notes, Berlin, February 7th, 1941—83/61542-4).

[†] Published in the Iraq Times of November 21st, 1941.

Now it may seem that Nuri Said's arguments might have carried some measure of conviction, but then to Pan-Arabists the most important factor was that the British Government showed no inclination to make any basic concession and, in fact, kept wishing that the solution of all controversial problems be postponed to the end of the war. This position, of course, was not calculated to attract them to co-operate with Britain.⁵⁷ One of the leading members of the Golden Square, Salah ed-Din es-Sabbagh, was of the opinion that England was isolated and on the brink of ruin.⁵⁸ The conviction prevailed among the nationalists that any decisive step must wait for the clarification of the Soviet standpoint.* For it appears that the majority expected the U.S.S.R. to line up with the enemies of Great Britain.†

The majority in the Government and the dominant officers' clique rejected Nuri Said's viewpoint.⁵⁹ Under the circumstances Nuri considered resigning from the Government; he demonstratively absented himself from the debate on foreign policy⁶⁰ and probably withdrew from Cabinet work.[‡]

In Parliament—which had no lack of British supporters—voices appeared favouring co-operation with England when the Italians took a beating in the Western Desert. Nevertheless, the Premier—true to his double-dealing policy—declared that Iraq basically guided herself by her wish to keep out of the war and by the need to struggle for Arab aspirations. He relegated faithfulness to treaty obligations to the last place.⁶¹

A further step in the campaign to oust the Premier was the wish expressed by the Regent for his resignation. Rashid Ali's situation was deteriorating. In an attempt to resolve the crisis the Minister of Defence, General Taha el-Hashimi, proposed that the leaders of both contending factions, that is, Nuri Said and Naji Shawkat, should resign from the Government. Nuri did so on January 21st. The fact that Naji Shawkat resigned two days later and apparently

* Es-Sabbagh, Fursan al-'uruba fi al-'Iraq (Knights of Arabism in Iraq), p. 153; Haddad, op. cit., p. 81. Haddad maintains that many meetings of nationalist leaders took place at the end of 1940 where this view was adopted.

† Es-Sabbagh, op. cit., pp. 114, 116, 149. But Haddad emphasises in his memoirs that the Arab leaders were aware of the fact that Soviet-Reich relations were worsening (Haddad, op. cit., pp. 81-82, 89-90).

‡ It may be so concluded from Papen's despatch (Ankara, January 4th, 1941—83/615336). In this despatch von Papen informed the Berlin centre of his discussion with the Iraqi envoy at Ankara, Kamel el-Kilani.

§ Only the amendment to Iraq's constitution voted May 27th, 1943, gave the monarch the right to dismiss a Premier. (See Khadduri, op. cit., pp. 289-97.)

The Premier was in a very difficult situation, because among other things, the Axis powers did not react to his requests for help (of which more later).

under further pressure precipitated a new crisis—and in consequence virtually all Ministers resigned. Under pressure of the four colonels the Regent appointed two new Ministers on January 28th—Yunis es-Sebawi and Ali Mahmud esh-Sheikh—so that the el-Kilani Government continued in power. But when they met with opposition in Parliament the Premier demanded that the Regent should dissolve that body. Asking for a respite till the evening, the Regent fled from the city. Unable to dissolve Parliament, Rashid Ali had to resign, and Taha el-Hashimi became Premier at the demand of the four colonels. The new Government was more cautious, but it did not last long. The army intervened again on April 1st, 1941; this Government was abolished and el-Kilani took over again.

Thus British intervention, which during the Libva victories inclined the Regent and other pro-British politicians to oppose the Premier, did not gain the desired results. This intervention, of course, could not but increase the tension in Anglo-Iraqi relations, and its failure later aroused criticism, of Sir Basil Newton in particular. The historian of that period, Majid Khadduri, has stated that 'The issue between Iraq and Great Britain had been reduced, in the last analysis. merely to the question of removing Rashid Ali from the Premiership', which 'naturally pushed him to throw in his lot with the extremists'. According to Khadduri, Rashid Ali did not necessarily want to stir up a conflict with Great Britain, but her representatives in Iraq aggravated the situation by misinforming London. 62 Although he admits in the second edition of his book that Rashid Ali was an Axis adherent, Majid Khadduri repeats the above thesis. Freya Stark, who was in Cairo during the events in question and came to Baghdad early in May, charges the British Ambassador—at least partly with responsibility for the Iraqi developments. She characterises him as incompetent and ignorant of the East. 63 And other British authors share this view.

It may be said, of course, that Britain was then reaping the fruits of her Iraq policy in the interwar period, and that her intervention in internal affairs wounded nationalist feelings. It is true that Basil Newton did not know the East. And the fact of his being envoy at Prague during the Munich conference did not add to his reputation. Nevertheless, the steps the British Government took in November and succeeding months must be assessed in the light of what is known of the Rashid Ali contacts with the Axis and of his further measures which, as we shall see, were no secret to the London Cabinet.

We cannot vouch for Rashid Ali's personal views, but it is certain that he reckoned with his Government's dependence on the Golden Square and the army generally which was in the hands of the four

colonels. As to the officers' anti-British position, neither el-Kilani nor the other members of his Government could have any doubt. A complicating factor was the activity of the Mufti, who by the turn of 1940–1 was already considering the question of an armed conflict with Great Britain.⁶⁴

RASHID ALI'S DEMANDS-HADDAD'S SECOND TRIP

It was by the middle of December at the latest that the German Government became aware of Iraq's desire for economic and military aid and the co-ordination of propaganda activity. 65 Iraq's wishes were presented to the Italian envoy at Baghdad and reached Berlin indirectly after a considerable delay. Negotiations on the delivery of arms and ammunition took place in December. Rashid Ali also made requests for war material on a commercial basis to the Japanese chargé d'affaires in Baghdad and the Japanese military attaché in Tehran. 66 Iraq's requirements, as reported to the Italian Legation, were as follows: 400 light machine-guns with ammunition, 50 light armoured cars, 10 anti-aircraft batteries with ammunition and equipment, explosives, anti-armour missiles and mines, 100,000 gas masks. An official declared that the Iraqi army preferred captured British arms and ammunition, since its equipment was originally English. But he did not exclude German or Italian arms.* Later on the Italian Government received a request to equip a full Iraqi division,† but it reacted with great reserve.

With the tension increasing in the political situation in Baghdad and the worsening of Rashid Ali's position, the nationalists aimed to clarify further the attitude of the Axis to their programme and to obtain arms. After numerous consultations they decided to get German arms via the Soviet Union and Iran, to establish diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. and get her to recognise the independence of the Arab countries. The question was broached, too, of organising a Pan-Arab political party, but no definite decision was reached on the matter.⁶⁷ The slow reaction to their requests induced the Iraqi Pan-Arabists to seek direct contacts with Berlin and Rome. Then the funds advanced to the Mufti⁶⁸ during Haddad's visit to Europe

^{*} Woermann's notes, Berlin, January 7th, 1941—83/61540. In these notes Woermann relates the report of the Italian envoy at Baghdad concerning a discussion with one of the four colonels-commander of the III Motorised Division, Salah ed-Din es-Sabbagh. Es-Sabbagh himself writes (op. cit., p. 140) that he prepared for the Italian and Japanese representatives a specified list of arms required for four divisions.

[†] Woermann's notes, Berlin, February 15th, 1941—83/61547. Haddad so informed Woermann. The Italian Government denied, however, that it received any such request (Woermann's notes, Berlin, March 6th, 1941—83/61549).

(August-October 1940) began to run short. Hence Baghdad proposed to Germany in December 1940 that the Mufti's private secretary should make another trip to Rome and Berlin. On his way Haddad was to stop in Turkey and Switzerland, where a number of extreme Pan-Arabists were living. ⁶⁹ On January 22nd, 1941, Osman Kemal Haddad left Baghdad with a letter from Hajj Amin el-Huseini (dated January 20th, 1941) addressed to 'His Excellency, Führer of Greater Germany, Adolf Hitler, Berlin'.

As for establishing relations with the U.S.S.R., Rashid Ali sent official instructions on the matter to his brother, Kamel el-Kilani, envoy to Ankara.⁷⁰

In the letter to Hitler the Jerusalem Mufti reiterated the nationalist pretensions and complaints against England and France. He pointed out that the Arab hatred of England had 'deep roots in primordial interest and vital problems and not in futile questions with superficial and transitory effects'. He gave his assurance that the Arabs had deep sympathy for the Axis states and were ready to rise against the common enemy, as soon as they were 'freed from certain material impediments' so that they could contribute in measure with their strength to 'the well-deserved defeat of the Anglo-Jewish coalition'. El-Huseini thanked Hitler for intervening in the Palestine question, and wrote in conclusion that he was sending his private secretary to Berlin in order to negotiate with the German Government 'in the name of the strongest and largest organisation in the Arab world', and in his own name, that of the 'Grand Mufti of Palestine'. The Arabs, he maintained, were ready to take up arms, but on condition that 'certain interests of a moral and material order are assured'. He added that the Arabs were now in a position to play an exceptionally important role, because 'by geographic coincidence they find themselves at the centre of land and sea crossroads' and at the junction point of British imperial communications. The Arabs were in a position to threaten British communication routes and even to sever connections between India, the Mediterranean and Turkey by way of the Persian Gulf and to make it impossible for Great Britain to exploit Mid-East oil.71

Thus the Mufti made his démarche in the name of 'the strongest and largest Arab organisation', his title for a group of anti-British Arab politicians. He asked for concrete commitments on material aid and on the future of the Arab countries. His private secretary, who arrived in Berlin in February 12th from Ankara and Rome, carried the draft of a declaration on these questions, which—like Hajj Amin's letter—was composed in French.⁷² According to the draft, the declaration was to contain eight points: (1) Recognition of the 'complete independence' of the already independent Arab countries:

Iraq, Egypt, the Sudan [sic!], Saudi Arabia and the Yemen; (2) recognition of the independence of the Arab countries under British mandate (Palestine and Transjordan) and those held as colonies or protectorates by Great Britain (the draft mentioned Kuwait, Dubai, Oman, Hadhramaut); (3) a statement to the effect that Germany and Italy would have no objections to Syria and Lebanon attaining full independence; (4) abrogation of the reservations to the full independence of Egypt and the Sudan contained in the treaties with Great Britain, with Italy reserving only the right to safeguard her imperial communication lines through the Sudan by agreement with Egypt; (5) a statement that Germany and Italy would not make use of any such means as the mandate system which abridge the full independence of the Arab countries; (6) recognition of the right of the Arab countries to unite and a commitment to create no obstacle for the Arab national programme in this respect; (7) condemnation of the Jewish national home in Palestine as an illegal entity and recognition of the right of the Arabs to solve the Jewish question in accordance with Arab nationalist aspirations and in the same manner as in the Axis countries; prohibition of all Jewish emigration to Arab countries; (8) 'Italy and Germany only desire that the whole Arab nation enjoy full prosperity and assume their historical and natural place in their properly due living space within the framework of the new world order and in economic co-operation with the Axis Powers on the basis of mutual benefit. From the Arab countries, it is desired that they recognise the status quo in everything concerning the property of churches and Christian missions, the right to worship of the various religious Christian sects, and to philanthropic activity (hospitals, orphanages and institutions for the blind).'

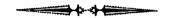
This document differed somewhat from the draft proposed by Haddad several months earlier. 73 First, the Arab countries were divided here into three categories: independent, those under British domination, and those under French rule. With regard to the third category the draft provided for the least obligations on the part of the Axis. Secondly, the draft had an imprecise formula on the share of the Arab countries in the 'new order'. Thirdly, the draft was broader in some respects and in some points put more precise limitations on the eventual authority of the Axis Powers over the Arab lands. They were limited to matters of Christianity in Palestine and to Italian imperial communications . . . through the Sudan, which is clearly treated in the draft as a country united with Egypt. But the most important communications route linking Italy with her East African colonies was the sea route via the Suez Canal, the Red Sea and the Bab el-Mandeb straits. If Italian soldiers were to be stationed at points dominating these arteries, then Italy would acquire in

Egypt, the Sudan and on the western shores of the Arabian Peninsula the same positions as those held by the British.

The Arabs' desire for arms and other material aid and their political demands fell on fertile soil in Berlin early in 1941. A few months previously neither Germany nor Italy had been inclined to embark on these undertakings and they had decided to make do with the declaration of October 23rd. But the way the situation had developed by the winter of 1940–41 and the fighting of their troops on the North African front caused the Germans to occupy themselves much more seriously with Arab affairs—though, as we shall see, this entailed no few political and technical difficulties.

VII

THE GERMANS AND THE IRAQ REVOLT



VON HENTIG'S MISSION TO SYRIA

HE Germans had been preparing themselves to deal with Near and Mid-Eastern affairs for some time before Haddad arrived in Berlin. Furthermore, the Abwehr had been active in that part of the world at least since August 1940 by agreement with the Auswärtiges Amt. 1 This activity developed most freely in Syria, where conditions had been very favourable since the collapse of France. Alfred Roser of the Auswärtiges Amt went to this country on behalf of the Abwehr in the early autumn of 1940. From there he forwarded to Berlin his evaluation of the situation and of the opportunities for activity in the 'Arab areas' and in Syria in particular.* But this was not enough to deal with the new situation that had arisen by the end of 1940 and the Auswärtiges Amt began to work out German policy towards the Arab countries. By that time certain changes could be observed in the standpoint of German officials as compared with that of September-October 1940, when the German-Italian Declaration of October 23rd of that year was prepared. In his notes for the December 9th, 1940, conference at the office of the Secretary of State, Wilhelm Melchers-chief of the Report Section Pol VII and present (1962) Ambassador of the German Federal Republic to New Delhi—analysed the situation in the Arab countries. He pointed to the tension in Syria and Iraq, to the Arab peoples' clear antipathy to the Italians and to the growing activity of the British and Gaullists. Melchers expressed fear that the Arabs' disillusionment with German passivity might cause them to incline

^{*} Melchers's notes, Berlin, November 27th, 1940—647/255223; Palmer to the Secretary of State, Beirut, October 23rd, 1940—FRUS, 1940, Vol. III, Washington, 1958, pp. 920–2—wrote: 'Roser has been here for three weeks, but he conducts himself properly.'

towards the British, and that this might have a decisive effect on the outcome of the war in the Eastern Mediterranean, which might in turn create a catastrophic situation in North Africa. He proposed that Italy's basic hegemony over the Arab countries should not be questioned and that the Germans should again undertake the preparation of a written declaration which would recognise the rights of the Arabs and Egyptians to political freedom and self-determination. The declaration was to contain a promise for the solution of the Jewish question and a suggestion for the creation of an independent Great Syria. In Melchers's opinion, a delegation of the German truce commission should proceed to Syria. Despite his reservation that 'the Arabs' national, military, cultural and state building powers should not be overestimated', Melchers hoped that even a partial realisation of some Arab demands would rouse the whole Arab world and perhaps even North Africa.²

By the end of December von Ribbentrop had decided to send a responsible and experienced envoy, Otto von Hentig,3 to the Middle East on what was supposed to be an informational mission. According to his instructions, 4 von Hentig was to report on the political and military situation in Syria and—if possible—in the adjoining countries. He was to investigate whether the British troops essentially threatened the countries of the Levant and whether Syria had adequate means of defence against an eventual invasion. He was also expected to establish the extent and progress of the Gaullist movement in Syria and the ways, means and results of British propaganda. In general, von Hentig's mission was to provide the leaders of Germany with the information required to formulate their policy towards the Arab countries. Another aim was to inform the German Government of the possibilities for economic relations and the state of German cultural institutions in Syria. The instructions contained a definite order from Ribbentrop to avoid 'everything which could be interpreted as approval or support of any tendencies directed against the French Government'. But this was practically impossible to realise. The very appearance of a German emissary at a time when the Arabs impatiently awaited some kind of change was enough to arouse hopes of an anti-French solution of Syrian problems. Moreover, von Hentig did not keep his presence in Syria a secret, nor did he avoid meeting Arab leaders.5

Von Hentig's conclusions were similar to Roser's. Both correctly assumed that the Italians did not enjoy popularity among the Arabs, whereas there were great potentialities for the Germans. This assumption was shared by independent on-the-spot observers. In his report to his Government on the impotence of the Italian Control Commission in the countries of the Levant, the United States Consul-General

at Beirut stated that the situation would radically change if a German Commission were to appear there. Under these circumstances, the idea of German representation on the Italian Control Commission arose of itself. In Hentig's opinion, German representatives would protect German interests, defend their political friends and commercial partners, control and eventually prevent trade with Britain, particularly in food and war materials, collect and transmit political and military information and conduct anti-British activity among the Arabs. Since Gaullist activity among French officials in Syria could be observed in various directions, it was logical to eliminate the adherents of 'Free France' from the administration in the countries of the Levant.

The question began to assume ever-growing importance for German policy owing to the developments in Iraq. The German Government had begun preparatory work on Iraq by the end of 1940.

THE PROBLEM OF SUPPLYING ARMS TO IRAQ

The Germans began with an investigation of the technical possibilities of supplying Iraq with arms. These efforts were continued after the fall of the el-Kilani Government on January 31st, 1941. Iraq's contact with the Axis Powers was not interrupted during the régime of el-Hashimi. What is more, Iraqi representatives—at Ankara, among other places—assured the Germans that the el-Hashimi Government held the same views as Rashid Ali.* Dr. Grobba, for many years envoy at Baghdad and German expert on Arabian affairs, considered that the Hashimi Government represented the same basic tendencies as its precursor, but applied more cautious tactics.8 These views were probably shared by the Auswärtiges Amt. Furthermore, the directors of British policy similarly evaluated the situation, considering that the new Premier of Iraq—as an advocate of extreme Pan-Arabism collaborated with Rashid Ali, and that this Government constituted no improvement from the viewpoint of relations with the Axis.†

It was not a simple matter to ship arms to Iraq. She was a long

^{*} Von Papen's despatches, Ankara of February 4th and 13th, 1941—792/273140 and 792/273153. But it is not known whether Iraqi-German contacts at that time were made on a Government level.

[†] See I. S. O. Playfair, *The Mediterranean and the Middle East*, Vol. II, London, HMSO, 1956, p. 178. This evaluation does not appear to us to be fully correct, since there are many indications that el-Hashimi was undecided; he did not desire a conflict with Great Britain and was comparatively submissive to the court—see Salah ed-Din es-Sabbagh, *Fursan al-'uruba fi al-'Iraq* (Knights of Arabism in Iraq), Damascus, 1956, p. 156.

way from the territories occupied by the Axis Powers and the technical possibilities for delivering arms were tied up with central political problems.

In so far as delivery from Germany was concerned, the least difficulties were afforded by the land route via the Soviet Union and Iran. And this route was proposed by Salah ed-Din es-Sabbagh of the 'Golden Square', because the chances of attracting the attention of British agents were not as great. For obvious reasons this was an important matter for both Germany and Iraq. In a conversation with the Italian envoy on January 20th, Rashid Ali suggested that arms from Germany should be shipped to Iraq by way of Rumania, the Black Sea, the U.S.S.R. and Iran.¹⁰

When the proposal was made to von Ribbentrop at the beginning of February, he declared that this route was out of the question. 11 The main reason for this decision was not the plan to attack the U.S.S.R. in the near future or the unwillingness to make German policy in the 'Arab area' dependent on Soviet agreement. For the fact was that at the end of 1940 the Soviet representatives declared to Schnurre that the transport of munitions did not fall within the sphere of the traffic agreement concluded in the exchange of letters between Ribbentrop and Molotov on September 29th, 1939.12 The Germans could therefore assume that the Soviet Union would oppose the transit of arms to Iraq. For the growth of German influence in a country situated so close to the southern frontiers of the Soviet Union (in World War I Russian troops crossed into Northern Iraq) was contrary to its interests. Because they wanted to attract Soviet attention towards their southern borders with talk of delineating their spheres of influence in the direction of the Persian Gulf—while planning to invade the U.S.S.R.—the Germans, of course, could not divulge to the Soviet Government their plans in Iraq.

In the conversation with Woermann in which he rejected the proposition to ship arms through the U.S.S.R., von Ribbentrop ordered that every effort be made to do so through Japan. Until then, the chief advocates of this plan and its sponsors in Tokyo were the Italians, ¹³ while the Reich representatives were instructed to favour that route. ¹⁴ The Iraqi-Japanese negotiations on the matter lasted from October 1940 to January 1941, ¹⁵ when they were broken off. After the change of Government at Baghdad the Japanese War Ministry came to the conclusion that it was out of the question to continue negotiations, although they had previously been ready to supply Iraq with old arms.*

^{*} Boltze's despatch, Tokyo, March 19th 1941—792/273131. Haddad maintained that the British Government agreed for the Iraqi authorities to buy arms in Japan (Woermann's notes, Berlin, February 26th, 1941—647/255061-2).

The Germans intervened in the matter with the Japanese Embassy at Berlin. ¹⁶ They argued that the Iraqi Government had in various ways informed the Axis Powers of their desire to join the armed struggle against Great Britain and that the German Government had decided to support this move in the near future. The German and Italian Tokyo Embassies then began to exert pressure on the Japanese Government in the same direction. But the Japanese Government soon lost the opportunity to change its negative position even after the return of Rashid Ali to the Premiership, ¹⁷ since the British troops had in the meantime blocked the entrance to the port of Basra, which they later occupied.

The idea was then advanced to ship arms to Iraq by way of Hungary and Turkey¹⁸ camouflaged as a transport from Hungary by Melchers and Co., Bremen. Von Papen regarded this as an impossible project to carry out.¹⁹ The calculation of Germany's Ambassador to Turkey was realistic at this time, that is, in the winter of 1940–1. For, although Ankara feared Germany and therefore avoided close relations with its enemies, it at the same time anticipated German aggression in the Balkans and a growing danger to Turkey.²⁰ It consequently did not desire to facilitate the plans of the Hitlerites.

Another version of the plan to supply Iraq through Turkey soon arose. Shipments from Germany to Iran and Afghanistan were made via Turkey. The Turkish authorities promised the governments of these countries not to create any obstacles to the transit of goods designated for them.²¹ At the same time Iran had a guarantee from Great Britain that she would not hinder her receiving goods shipped through Iraq.²² Trade relations between Iran and Germany were very active at that time. Under these conditions, Admiral Canaris suggested a plan for smuggling arms into Iraq in the transports of metallurgical equipment destined for Iran.²³ But von Ribbentrop rejected this proposition.

Later another proposal was advanced to direct through Iraq shipments of arms consigned to Iran or Afghanistan, since the Iraqi army could then intercept and seize such transports. In favour of this plan was the fact that Abdul Majid, Afghanistan's Minister of the National Economy, who visited Berlin at the beginning of March, made it understood that he was ready to help Iraq.²⁴ This idea was considered again later when the Iraqi revolt against the British was approaching a climax.²⁵ Further steps were undertaken then to realise the above plan.

A lively interest in the matter of supplying arms to, and developing the situation in Iraq was exhibited both by the Auswärtiges Amt and the military High Command.²⁶ The Abwehr and the Auswärtiges

Amt maintained constant contact on this question.* According to Admiral Canaris, the High Command of the land forces showed a lively interest in German activity in Iraq and the 'Arab area' in general.²⁷ OKW many times expressed orally its wishes regarding the strengthening of German activity in the Arab countries, and transmitted a special memorandum on that question on February 5th.† It is not accidental that such diligent conferences on the question of supplying arms to Iraq and—as we see—on Arab policy in general took place directly before the Balkan campaign. For, while the Germans were planning their activity in the Arab countries, the British were planning important steps in the Balkans.²⁸ It may be assumed that just as it was clear to Great Britain that the Germans would eventually attack Greece, the Germans must have been certain that Great Britain would expand her war activities in the Balkans. At any rate, a diversion in the Arab countries would at least make it more difficult for Britain to direct armed forces to the Balkans.

ITALY'S POSITION ON DEVELOPING ACTION IN IRAQ

In considering plans for an anti-British uprising in Iraq and for supplying arms to that country, German diplomacy had to concern itself with the question of Italy's attitude. We have referred above to Italy's reluctance to stir up the Arab peoples against France, which stemmed primarily from the colonial programme of Italian Fascism.‡ What is more, the Italians were by no means enthusiastic about German intervention in Eastern Mediterranean affairs. Only his failures compelled Mussolini to agree on the participation of German armed forces in the North African campaign; this was also the reason why the Germans bore the main brunt of the Balkan campaigns. In Iraq the Italians were in a better situation than the Germans, since they had a mission there and hence possessed better and fresher information on developments. Of course, the Italian Government supplied the Germans with certain information, but they did so much too late. What is more, they took no initiative in joint political activity and failed to propose the common financing of Arab personalities close to the Axis.29

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^{*} The Abwehr command proposed to establish permanent liaison with the Auswärtiges Amt on Arab questions (Grobba's notes, Berlin, February 9th, 1941—647/255061-2).

[†] DGFP, Series D, Vol. XII, London, 1962, no. 18, pp. 30–32. However, OKW saw Arab problems in terms of the Hashimi-Saudi rivalry and proposed first of all to re-establish contacts with Ibn Saud and ship him arms.

[‡] A similar position toward an Arab uprising against Turkey was taken during World War I by the British Government in India. (See Ireland, *Iraq. A Study in Political Development*, London, 1937, pp. 100-1.)

While the Iraqi Government continued to demand aid and complained that it was not granted,* the Italian Government drafted a document in the name of both Axis Powers to be sent to the Arab chiefs in Baghdad. That document³⁰ reveals in no uncertain manner that the Italians showed reluctance about anti-British aims in Iraq. The authors first of all counselled the Arabs to be cautious and stressed that the Axis Governments did not wish Iraq, in counting on eventual military aid from them, to adopt a position which would encourage the British to occupy the country. Secondly, the question of aid was formulated vaguely and very indefinitely in the document, which stated that the Germans and Italians wished to assume responsibility only after the definitive investigation of all circumstances involved 'in accordance with the style and principles of their reliable policies'. The Italians proposed to convey to the Arab politicians that the Axis Governments would start consultations to explore the possibilities of sending to Iraq a limited amount of arms and for extending trade relations. Thirdly, the document summarily rejected all political conditions put down by the Arab leaders: it expressed itself as against the establishment of a national government in Syria, and declared unwillingness to give Iraq a guarantee of Turkish and Iranian neutrality.† The Palazzo Chigi did not even consider it expedient to reiterate the general formula of the October 23rd, 1940, Declaration. The positive content of the Italian document was limited to the statement that only an Axis victory would liberate the countries of the Middle East from British domination. Besides, the Italian draft expressed the hope that the Rashid Ali Government would stay in power and would manage to prevent Iraq being turned into a base of military operations directed against the Axis Powers.

The content of this document could not be regarded as in any way encouraging to the Iraqi adherents of the Axis. Its authors actually advised the Arab leaders to continue bargaining with the British and to await the day of the final victory of the 'new order'. The Italians explained to the Germans that they did not wish to press Rashid Ali too hard to rise against Great Britain, since the British army had easier access to Iraq than did the Axis. Hence, Iraq's open defiance might end in a victory for British prestige.³¹ Although the Italians, owing to their defeats in North Africa, feared further set-

^{*} In a conversation with the secretary of the Italian mission on January 20th, 1941, Rashid Ali complained that there was no reply from the Axis Governments on his request, and that that was an important source of his internal difficulties (Woermann's notes, Berlin, February 7th, 1941—83/61542-4).

[†] These demands were made by Rashid Ali and es-Sabbagh in conversations with the Italian envoy. It is not difficult to realise that even a negative reply did not have to be formulated in so sharp a manner as were the Italian draft instructions to Gabrielli.

backs in the Arab countries, it does not seem that the extremely negative formulation of their document was motivated exclusively by the explanation they presented to the Germans. Owing to German opposition that document was not sent.

Varied standpoints were taken in Berlin on the events in Iraq. Of course, the Germans wanted to utilise the opportunities open to them in the Arab world,³² but they did not know how to do so—and when. After the Italian failures in the Balkans and North Africa the Germans no longer had any inclination to refrain from political activity on their own in the 'Arab areas'. Assertions began to appear in German documents to the effect that the Italian views should not be given as much attention as in the past,³³ that their priority should continue to be formally acknowledged,³⁴ but that certain matters should be settled without them, or even in secret. The military demanded that the German decision to give Italy freedom of action in the Arab countries be re-examined and that future political activity in the Middle East be directed vigorously from Germany.³⁵

Ribbentrop took the position that Italy should be informed and her priority of interests formally recognised, while he maintained at the same time that since the Italians failed to show any activity in the Arab countries, the Germans must assume the initiative. He proposed that Arab affairs should be considered jointly with the OKW and that the Mufti of Jerusalem should be financed without Italy's prior agreement.* With respect to supplying arms to Iraq the German position was to eliminate Italy completely from the deal, at least at the beginning,† when political decisions would be taken on the matter.

During his second trip to Berlin Haddad got the impression that the Arabs would gain from Italy's defeats. He related in his memoirs that the Germans requested him to see that the Iraqi authorities gave confused answers to any future Italian questions regarding their relations with Germany, and to assure them that no concrete results had been attained.³⁶

- * Woermann's notes, Berlin, February 4th, 1941—792/273154-55. Before that Ribbentrop made the payment of money to the Mufti dependent on the agreement of the Italian Government, but the Palazzo Chigi did not react to German enquiries on the matter.
- † On February 15th Woermann asked the Italian Chargé d'Affaires at Berlin in Ribbentrop's name that the Italian envoy at Baghdad should refrain from further steps on the matter of supplying arms until the German Government had investigated the possibilities of their transportation. Only then was this question to be raised at Baghdad, 'not as a unilateral German problem, but as that of the Axis', i.e. jointly with the Italians (Woermann's notes, Berlin, February 15th, 1941—83/61547). On February 21st, 1941, Woermann renewed his request not to duplicate Germany's efforts in this field (Woermann's memorandum, Berlin, February 21st, 1941—DGFP, XII, Washington, 1962, no. 68, p. 121).

The Germans thus began to assume the initiative in the Arab world without considering their partners. In case of an Axis victory this initiative and activity could change the division of spheres of influence among the allies in favour of Germany, especially since this matter had not been finally settled between them. And this is precisely what the Italians feared. It was these fears and their colonial plans that were the bases for the passivity and unusual caution displayed by the Italian Government towards Arab affairs and not the 'political reliability' of which they boasted.

Thus, in assuming initiative in the Arab countries Germany's rulers had to concern themselves with a number of problems, chief among them being the possible repercussions of such initiative on Germano-Italian relations. To what extent should the German Government regard Italian interests and intentions and its own commitments? How far could the Germans proceed with separate activity? What would be the impact of such activity on Italy's position? These were particularly burning questions, since they involved relations with Arab nationalists and the Reich's propaganda activity.

From their very first contacts with the Axis Powers the Arab leaders insisted primarily on a declaration supporting their demand for the independence and federation of the Arab states. But owing to its colonialist plans the Italian Government refrained from granting a clear-cut guarantee of Arab independence and altogether refused to support the demand for Arab unity. There had been no change in the Italian standpoint in this respect since the publication of the October 23rd, 1940, declaration. Early in March Ambassador Buti assured von Mackensen-German envoy to the Quirinal-that the declaration of envoy Gabrielli made to Rashid Ali at Baghdad in July 1940, and quoted by the emissaries of the Mufti and Iraqi Pan-Arabists, was a private enunciation. The official position, he maintained, was expressed only in the declaration of October 23rd, 1940.* This was said at the time when Haji Amin el-Huseini's private secretary was making efforts in Berlin to obtain German support for Arab aspirations. Buti's clarification meant that the Italian Government did not intend to go beyond that declaration.

WOERMANN'S MEMORANDUM OF MARCH 7TH, 1941

Contrary to the position adopted several months previously, it was decided in Berlin early in 1941 not to leave the sole initiative in Arab

^{*} Mackensen's despatch, Rome, March 5th, 1941—83/61548. During negotiations on the declaration question in July and August 1940, when Haddad and Naji Shawkat made references to Gabrielli's declaration, the Palazzo Chigi did not disayow it in that form.

affairs to the Italians. What, then, was Germany's new attitude towards the Arabs' political demands?

In conversation with the Mufti's private secretary on February 26th, Woermann partly identified himself with the Italian standpoint, stating that it would be difficult under prevailing conditions to accept the draft of the declaration proposed by Hajj Amin el-Husseini. When asked to make more specific the nature of the difficulties Woermann pointed to the Arab demands on the question of Syria and argued that if the Reich Government supported them, the French administration in that country might go over to de Gaulle.³⁷

But the matter did not end there. By the end of February Auswärtiges Amt had begun to work energetically on the problems connected with Reich policy in the Arab world. Undersecretary Woermann—chief of the political department of the Ministry—was ordered by von Ribbentrop to work out plans for Germany's further steps in the Arab lands and to pay special attention to the question of 'how this problem is to be handled with reference to our aim of achieving England's defeat'. 38 On March 7th Woermann filed a detailed report including twelve appendices.* Accepted by the leaders of the Auswärtiges Amt, Woermann's memorandum presented in the precise form of political propositions that which had previously been expressed only in the loose notes of the employees and directors of the Amt, and the OKW. On Ribbentrop's direct request, the propaganda and informational activities of the Reich in the Arab East had previously been limited by consideration of the Italian viewpoint; Woermann now demanded that the Germans should expand their initiative in this field while they simultaneously attempted to overcome the reluctance and reserve of the Italian Government.

But the problem remained of whether it was possible to issue a 'political declaration for Greater Arabia'. Woermann maintained that 'purely from the standpoint of the German interests, there could

* Woermann's memorandum, Berlin, March 7th, 1941—DGFP, XII, no. 133, pp. 234-43. The appendices (71/50780-50808) were: (1) a map of the Arab countries; (2) statistical data on fourteen Arab lands from the Persian Gulf to the Atlantic, including among other things the number of inhabitants and the numbers of the Arab populations; (3) a chart of Near and Middle East treaties; (4) Grobba's notes of March 5th, 1941, regarding the importance of Iraqi oil for conducting the war in the Middle East; (5) notes on the Mufti of Jerusalem; (6) notes on German propaganda in Arab countries; (7) text of the October 23rd, 1940, declaration; (8) text of the draft declaration presented by Haddad and its German translation; (9) the Italian draft instructions to the envoy Gabrielli at Baghdad; (10) Abetz's despatch from Paris of February 28th, 1941, outlining his standpoint on the question of the declaration; (11) draft reply to the Mufti's letter to Hitler; (12) Ripken's notes of March 6th, 1941, on supplying arms to Iraq. Appendices 7, 8, 9 and 12 were considered above.

be no objection to such a political declaration. Given the Arabs' dislike of the English and of the Italians, it would certainly be easy for us to attain a position of influence in a Greater Arab empire.' Considering the Italian arguments against the Arab demands, he argued that certain people might doubt whether the Arabs had matured to the point of creating and maintaining such a state. Especially since it was universally recognised that it would be weak from the military viewpoint. But all that, concluded Woermann, 'need not stand in the way of giving them such a declaration now'.

Another German memorandum of that period favoured recognition of the independence of the Arab countries and of their right to unite in a federation. Its author was of the opinion that Germany would not be able to mobilise the Arabs against Great Britain without such a declaration, and that the Germans should in general counterpose the idea of nationalism and the 'living space' policy to British imperialism.³⁹

The Wehrmacht High Command, in its memorandum of February 5th, 1941, also thought it necessary to recognise 'the independence of Arabia as a war aim of the Axis'. It stressed the 'favourable position' of Germany in relation to the Arabs, in that she could 'with a good conscience' promise everything they wanted on 'the solution of the Jewish question in Palestine'. However, OKW thought that 'the question of a Greater Arab empire extending from the Persian Gulf and across the Mediterranean coast and to the Red Sea (possibly under Ibn Saud) seems from our point of view not yet ripe for decision'.*

The source of the difficulties, according to Woermann, lay in the fact that the Germans had to take into account the interests and views of other powers, primarily Italy, who—as we saw—continuously resisted a clear declaration on Arab independence and federation. Woermann indicated that the Italian Government, hitherto unwilling to discuss Arab affairs with Germany, had only recently begun to make certain changes in this respect. It had begun to provide Germany with more rapid and more accurate information than before. The Palazzo Chigi was supposed to have sent Haddad to Berlin on its own initiative. In Woermann's opinion, it was necessary in principle to discuss the matter with the Italians and to establish their aims in the Arab countries, but the appropriate time for such an exchange of views had not yet come.

This was an important and far-reaching policy statement. Until then the Reich Government had taken note of Italy's prerogatives

*OKW memorandum of February 5th, 1941—DGFP, XII, no. 18. OKW regarded conditions as unripe for Arab unity and considered that internal Arab rivalries were too great.

and refrained from activity in regions regarded as the Italian domain, although they had never definitively committed themselves to the delineation of their respective spheres of influence. The Germans had merely limited themselves to the general acceptance of Italian postulates. Such was the state of affairs in July 1940. The division of spheres of influence, as fixed by the Tripartite Pact, 40 was of a general character; it did not deal with the delineation of German and Italian spheres of influence, but only provided for Japan's recognition of the former's leadership in establishing the 'new order' in Europe, and for recognition by the Germans and Italians of Japan's priority in East Asia. It might have appeared at first sight that the German standpoint, as formulated in Woermann's memorandum, presented nothing new in comparison with their position in 1940. But this was not the case. For in 1940 the Germans refrained from any activity in the Arab countries and allowed the Italians a free hand there. But at the beginning of 1941 the Hitlerites began to act—and without any particular understanding with the Italians at that. They were of the opinion that discussions with Italy on these matters would be premature, since Germany expected essential changes in the balance of forces in her favour. An agreement concluded during the course of war could not fully consider such changes and the Germans would have had to recognise Italian claims to a much greater extent than would be justified by the actual balance of forces.

Recognising that the balance of forces in the Axis camp was rapidly turning in their favour, the Germans had no wish for any definitive determination of the future spheres of influence. They considered that all discussions at that time on the future of the 'Arab areas' would have a negative effect on the Italo-German alliance. Hence, although they decided to take a more active part in Arab affairs, the Germans could not issue the desired far-reaching declaration.

France was another state whose interests had to be considered, according to the calculations of the chief of the Political Department. The Reich Ambassador to Paris, Abetz, in his despatch of February 28th, expressed the sentiment that the public German commitment on the question of a Great Arab state would effect the rapid development of the Gaullist movement in Syria. Pétain would consider such a commitment as contrary to the cease-fire agreement which obligated the Vichy Government to maintain order in the French colonies and mandated territories.* Woermann, too, feared the

^{*} In his despatch Abetz also presented the viewpoints of French experts on African matters, who expressed fears that the emergence of a Great Arab state might have repercussions among the Negro population and arouse difficult social and racial conflicts in Africa, the economic support of Europe. In referring to this view Abetz wanted to indicate the negative effects from the viewpoint of the adher-

spread of Gaullism and a weakening of the collaborationist policy within France and her colonial empire. He pointed out that inasmuch as a declaration on Great Arabia would also embrace Syria, it would be contradictory to the general postulates of German policy that the French colonial empire should not be an object of bargaining, for the time being. It must be admitted that, from the German point of view, the policy of not encroaching upon the French colonial empire was fully justified. Owing to the weakness of Germany's navy, the conquest of the French overseas possessions against the will of the French authorities would have been very difficult, if not impossible. For example, in July 1940 the Germans demanded a number of concessions from France in North Africa. 41 which Pétain refused. 42 Indeed, the maintenance of Vichy domination over the French colonial empire—of course, until the redivision of colonies after the war—was the cornerstone of Franco-German relations. It was for many reasons convenient not to raise these questions at all, for they did not only involve relations with the Vichy Government. Because of Italy's claims on French North Africa, stirring up disputes over the French overseas possessions threatened an inevitable storm. Woermann hence concluded that the time had not yet arrived to involve relations with France on the question of a declaration on Great Arabia.

True, the principle of maintaining the status quo with regard to France's colonial empire was infringed in Indochina, where the Japanese were exerting ever-growing power and control. But the Germans had no means to counter that development and did not wish to antagonise their Far-Eastern ally.

Relations with Turkey, too, were involved in the question of the declaration. Thus, Gerede, Turkey's Berlin Ambassador, gave Germany to understand that his Government was concerned with the future of the Arab countries and demanded 'collaboration' on this matter. ⁴³ Von Papen advised his Government to discuss Arab affairs with the Turkish Government, for the latter had claims on Syria, and he indicated that in return for certain services rendered to the Axis Turkey could be satisfied with a promise of Aleppo and its environs. Furthermore the petroleum-bearing region around Mosul had been a subject of Anglo-Turkish controversy in the '20s. Arab politicians were aware of Turkey's ambitions and some of them feared German-Turkish collaboration. ⁴⁴ Hence the Axis states could not promise to cede to Turkey territories which the Arabs regarded

ents of the 'European idea' of the movement for a united Arabia, particularly since Germany had already considered in 1940 the creation of a German colonial empire in Central Africa. (See, for instance, the notes of Bielefeld, Berlin, November 6th, 1940, cited in DGFP, XI, no. 298, pp. 483-91.)

as their own without risking loss of influence in the Arab world. The Germans therefore could not discuss Arab affairs with Turkey, since they would, in that case, have to take up a position on Ankara's claims.

The Hitlerite official Woermann finally turned to the question of relations with the Soviet Union.

THE MIDDLE EAST AND OPERATION 'BARBAROSSA'

Soviet-German relations at that time were shaped by Hitler's decision to attack the U.S.S.R. On December 18th, 1940, Hitler issued directive number 21, the so-called operation 'Barbarossa', 45 which was a summary of previously worked out military plans. In January 1941 orders were prepared for the large military formations with regard to the planned attack. During February and March German staffs drafted orders for the various field armies and the details were elaborated for the participation of Finland and Rumania in the war against the Soviet Union. A conference held on December 5th, 1940, set the middle of May 1941 for the attack on the U.S.S.R.; it would follow the occupation of Bulgaria and invasion of Greece. 46 Adopted in July 1940, the idea of war against the U.S.S.R. thus entered the stage of concrete preparations.

On the basis of this fundamental plan, the Germans took the following political and military steps in the countries bordering the Soviet Union: (1) The Germano-Finnish understanding of September 22nd, 1940, on the transit of German troops and military equipment; (2) the military guarantee to Rumania and the stationing of German troops on its territory at the beginning of October 1940; (3) the plan for German troops crossing into Bulgaria (already known to Stalin in January 1941). These steps aroused opposition and evoked strong protests from the Soviet Government.

The decision and order to attack the U.S.S.R. were kept a deep secret by Hitler. Even the top functionaries of the Auswärtiges Amt did not know of them officially, and some of them even took the propositions projected in the November talks with Molotov in Berlin seriously.⁴⁷ On that occasion Hitler and Ribbentrop had proposed to Molotov a division of spheres of influence in which the Soviet Union would direct her attention to the countries at her southern borders in the regions of the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf. It is worth noting that in directive 18, of November 11th, 1940, one day before Molotov's arrival at Berlin, Hitler ordered that all verbal instructions regarding preparations for the Eastern campaign should be continued⁴⁸ irrespective of the results of the conversations with the Soviet Premier. And, in fact, these results could not be

regarded as satisfactory for the Nazi Government, since Molotov stubbornly demanded that Hitler and Ribbentrop should clarify and undertake commitments which would reassure the U.S.S.R. on the matter of Rumania, Finland, Bulgaria and Black Sea Straits.

The German aim was undoubtedly to distract the attention of the U.S.S.R. from German preparations directly on her borders and to embroil the Soviet Government with Great Britain, then the dominant power in the regions of the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. This strategy appears in the document entitled 'The Need for Action in the Arab Southeast and in Iran'. 49 This document elaborates the idea of unleashing a revolt in Iran by the extremist adherents of the Axis, who were in communication with the successor to the throne, the present Shah of Iran. This revolt was to lead to Soviet troops entering Iran from the north and British troops from the south, and to the clash between the Soviet Union and Britain—on which the Germans counted so much. Woermann, however, was of a different opinion. He assumed that the Middle East was rather a theatre of agreement between Great Britain and the Soviet Union. Moreover, Woermann's conception was closely linked with the plan to attack the U.S.S.R. But he maintained that for the Germans to continue efforts to direct Soviet attention southwards it would be necessary to treat Iraq as a Persian Gulf state.

In his notes on Woermann's memorandum⁵⁰ Weizsäcker expressed the following opinion on the relation of Arab policy to the German-Soviet relations. (This was furthermore the only question he raised with von Ribbentrop.) 'I find the memorandum very clear and valuable', he wrote.

In addition, I would like to make the following general comments in regard to it: How the Arab movement is best to be exploited against England depends on the larger problem of Germany—Russia.

(a) If we do not need to show consideration for Russia, then the course of action outlined by Herr Woermann is the right one. The narrow-minded Arab policy of the Italians should gradually be curbed. A discussion with the Turks, as suggested by Herr von Papen, would, in my opinion, alienate the Arabs. There remains, therefore, the supplying of some arms, some money and good words, the effect of which on the Arab movement should not be overestimated. (b) In the Arab area only the entry of a hostile great power would be a menace to England; that is the unleashing of Russia in this direction, somewhat in the sense of the Soviet suggestion of November of last year.

There would be other good reasons too, in favour of this course of action. It should only be taken up in greater detail in this connection, however, if military decisions of an entirely different kind have not already been made.

Weizsäcker's marginal notes on Woermann's memorandum were couched in the same spirit.

To these notes Weizsäcker appended the despatch from Count von der Schulenburg—Germany's Ambassador in Moscow—of November 26th, 1940,⁵¹ which, among other things, touched on Soviet aspirations in the Persian Gulf area.

Weizsäcker was undoubtedly right in pointing out that Germany's policy in the Arab countries—like her Mediterranean policy in general—was closely linked with the question of German-Soviet relations. He knew unofficially that 'military decisions of an entirely different kind were already made'.⁵² He must have known, too, that the despatch from Moscow of November 26th, 1940, meant that the Soviet Government had not withdrawn its objections to Hitler's policy in the Balkans and Finland, and that the proposals in the despatch could not be accepted by the Germans. He must furthermore have been aware that the Reich Government had not replied to the proposals made in that despatch.⁵³

Perhaps Weizsäcker wanted to indicate that an attack on the Soviet Union would preclude the possibility of the incursion of German Fascist imperialism into the Arab lands.*

RIBBENTROP'S DECISION—WEIZSÄCKER'S LETTER TO THE EX-MUFTI OF JERUSALEM

After weighing up all the questions which the German Government had to consider, Woermann came to the conclusion in his memorandum that 'it appears to be difficult in any case to issue a declaration in favour of a Greater Arab federation, which is based on an accord with Italy and goes substantially beyond our former declaration'.

Woermann took this position probably because—among other things—he did not rate the chances of anti-British action in the Arab countries very highly. He agreed with von Weizsäcker in this respect. They considered that as long as Turkey remained neutral the Arab countries in Asia were beyond the reach of the Axis; the Germans could only resort to aerial operations, which would be at best a very difficult undertaking, whereas other non-military action against Britain would be of small significance. In so far as Iraq was concerned, Woermann's position corresponded with the Italian assessment: he was of the opinion that the effect of an open Iraqi revolt would be short-lived and perhaps result in raising Britain's prestige. The situation would change, however, with the presence of German

* Weizsäcker cites a fragment of the document concerned as an illustration of his opposition to aggression against the U.S.S.R. (E. v. Weizsäcker, *Erinnerungen* (Recollections), Munich, 1950, p. 307).

troops 'on the Arab land bridge' or with the collapse of British resistance. In that event, the Iraqi nationalists could be of great help to the Germans by destroying British airfields, attacking communication lines and isolated British military units and by striking in Transjordan and Palestine. 'In these circumstances', concluded Woermann, 'it must be our policy to keep Iraq's confidence in us alive . . . so that Iraq will strike when the overall military and political situation makes such action desirable.'

Another more succinctly formulated version of this thesis reads: 'Iraq's open rebellion against England should not be actively promoted until the moment is conducive to success. Meanwhile the will to resist must be kept alive.' It may be surmised that the time would be ripe after victory over the U.S.S.R.

But an entirely different interpretation is also possible. Germany's rulers wanted to start war against the Soviet Union before the defeat of Great Britain. However, as shown by the Conference of February 3rd, 1941, the Germans would, in that case, only be able to assign insufficient troops and equipment to the North African front. Hence the exploitation of the anti-British forces in the Arab countries both during and after the Balkan campaign assumed greater importance than heretofore. Moreover, in the Near and Middle East the Germans could take over the oilfields and refineries, which could prove of great importance to their ability to conduct the war and to the future strength of the Hitlerite Reich. Such was most probably von Ribbentrop's calculation. He did not base his decision⁵⁴ on the careful assessment of the situation by the Auswärtiges Amt officials. He commanded: 'We must strive for an early date [for the uprising in Iraq], and that in consultation with the Italians.' It followed from this that the Germans would favour an uprising in Iraq in the near future and were to find ways and means to support it. And this is how Ribbentrop's formulation was understood by the Auswärtiges Amt.*

According to Woermann's memorandum it was necessary to make the Arabs some political promise, whereas Ribbentrop, who laid greater stress on the need for activity in the Arab countries, did not project any proposals of his own on this matter. Composed with all the above considerations in view, the German declaration went somewhat farther, it is true, than the Italo-German statement of the autumn of 1940, but it did not even approximate to what the Arabs demanded. And it was also supposed to be kept secret. The Germans decided to issue it in the form of a letter from the Secretary of State, Weizsäcker, to the ex-Mufti of Jerusalem.†

^{*} See Woermann's notes to Ambassador Stahmer, Berlin, March 24th, 1941—792/273128-9.

[†] Berlin, March 11th, 1941—71/5137-8; or Berlin, April 8th, 1941—DGFP,

Germany, who has never possessed Arab territories, has no territorial aims in the Arab area. She is of the opinion that the Arabs, a people with an old civilization, who have demonstrated their competence for administrative activity and their military virtues, are entirely capable of governing themselves. Germany therefore recognizes the complete independence of the Arab states, or where this has not yet been achieved, the claim to win it.

Asserting that the Arabs and the Germans faced the same enemies—the English and the Jews—Weizsäcker declared, in his letter to the ex-Mufti of Jerusalem, that the German Government was ready to co-operate with and to extend to the Arabs military and financial aid when they were compelled to fight the British in order to achieve their national aims. Weizsäcker pointed out, at the same time, that the Italians had been informed of the letter and agreed with its contents.

Thus, Weizsäcker's letter to Hajj Amin el-Huseini departed in tone from the instructions to the envoy, Gabrielli. He made a special effort to couch the letter in the warmest possible tone.* But it was not particularly encouraging to the Arabs. On a matter so important for Iraq as the supply of arms the letter merely contained a promise that this would be done as soon as an appropriate way could be found. In conversations with Woermann, Haddad raised the question of financial assistance in case of war with Great Britain. He asked, in the name of the Iraq Government, for £2 million monthly to cover the gap resulting from the loss of revenue paid to Iraq by Great Britain. But Woermann made no concrete promise.55 True, he took a positive position in the memorandum on extending credit for purchase of arms, but he considered it unnecessary to assume an obligation of regular £10,000 monthly payments to the Mufti of Jerusalem. This was the sum Haji Amin had asked the Germans and Italian Governments each to pay him; Woermann, however, proposed a single allotment to the equivalent of 100,000 RM. Von Ribbentrop endorsed this settlement.56

FURTHER DECISIONS: PROPAGANDA, ABWEHR, SYRIA

The following further practical propositions were adopted by the Auswärtiges Amt:

On general Arab questions the Germans would mainly contact

* On this question Weizsäcker made a hand-written notation on the sheet containing his notes on Woermann's memorandum of March 7th, 1941, Berlin, March 12th, 1941—71/50811.

XII, no. 293, pp. 488-90. This letter is reproduced many times in the collections of the Auswärtiges Amt records.

Hajj Amin el-Huseini. Relations with Ibn Saud, the Iraqi Government and the Syrian nationalist leaders were to be expanded. Von Hentig made many contacts during his Syrian visit, but he was far from certain whether the nationalists would be able to take any effective action, owing to personal rivalries, divisions and lack of a united leadership.⁵⁷ The Wilhelmstrasse officials were aware of the need to avoid conflicts with the Mufti of Jerusalem which might result from their co-operation with Syrian politicians.*

It was resolved to expand German propaganda in the Arab countries. Until then, Berlin had given three daily radio broadcasts in classical Arabic totalling ninety-five minutes, excluding the programmes beamed to the Maghreb,† besides sending amulets, postcards, broadsides and pamphlets. Before Italy entered the war, the Germans used Italian channels and made shipments by way of Libya and Iran. But only the latter route was accessible to them at the beginning of 1941. An Arab edition of the Wehrmacht journal 'Signal' was published and the nationalist magazine appearing in Geneva called Nation Arabe, published in French by Emir Shekib Arslan, was financed.‡ Materials and articles were provided for Arab newspapers in Spain, Spanish Morocco and South America. Propaganda material was also sent to the Arab National Congress at Buenos

* Hajj Amin el-Huseini had his supporters and rivals in Syria, particularly among the Palestinian nationalists residing in emigration in the countries of the Levant. Thus, for instance, the Mufti insisted that the Germans should not maintain any contact with Musa el-Alami (he appears as 'George' in Abwehr reports) and that they should arrange all matters in Syria with Shukri el-Quwatli.

† Broadcasts in West Arabic and Kabyl dialects were made from Berlin and Paris radio stations. The latter aimed to create the impression that the broadcasts were made by Frenchmen. Propaganda directed to the Maghreb countries also reflected the internal contradiction of German policy: the Hitler Government had constantly to reckon with the French standpoint, but it had at the same time to give expression to the nationalism of the Western Arabs. The Moslem collaborators in the German propaganda machine desired a sharper tone in the propaganda destined for the Maghreb countries. In the records of the propaganda administration there is a letter from Paris dated April 17th, 1941, which says: 'On the basis of decisions made recently on the highest levels, it is necessary to reckon particularly with French interests. The difficulties in this respect flow from the fact that the North African nationalists continuously attempt to introduce anti-French tendencies in our propaganda' (DZA Potsdam, Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda, Abteilung Rundfunk 646: Deutsche Sendungen in Maghrebinischer Sprache-Reich Ministry of Universal Education and Propaganda, Radio Division: German broadcasts in the Maghreb language). It is interesting to note that early in 1940 the Germans planned to broadcast propaganda from the radio station at Łódź (Poland) for the Moroccan soldiers in Syria. But they quickly gave up this idea, for short-wave sets were not allowed in

‡ This magazine, just like its owner and publisher, played an important role in the annals of the Arab national movement.

Aires. The Reichsrundfunkgesellschaft published the bi-weekly Barid esh-Sharq (Eastern Post); the Auswärtiges Amt contribution to this undertaking consisted of providing material and organising distribution. The Arab press received an article service, while the Transozean and DNB agencies had their representatives in Beirut. Newspapers were mailed from Germany to Spain, Spanish Morocco and Turkey.

The Hitler officials must have regarded radio broadcasts as the most effective type of propaganda to the Arab countries, for they decided to give five programmes daily, and to extend transmission time to 105 minutes.⁵⁸ In conjunction with the decision to expand Germany's activity, it was determined to increase her influence on the Arab press in Syria by sending two correspondents there, and to provide the Beirut *Nahar* with a news service and important equipment. It was further decided to supply several Syrian newspapers with photographic plates and newsprint as well as to establish telegraphic connection between Ankara and Beirut twice a week. Cinemas in Beirut, Damascus and Aleppo were to get German films and newsreels.⁵⁹

It was decided to extend the Abwehr espionage and diversive-espionage activity. But the latter was to be limited to Palestine, Transjordan and Egypt. In so far as Iraq was concerned, the possibility was admitted of sabotaging British installations there. As we saw, on Ribbentrop's direct orders, Abwehr activity had not formerly been great in these countries. Now Admiral Canaris requested from Ribbentrop written general permission for active work there. Ribbentrop refused this request, demanding that he should first be informed of the plans of action; and he decided that the details of the Abwehr activity should be kept secret from the Italians. 60

Following the line of the conversations that took place between Woermann, Admiral Canaris and Colonels Lahousen, Piekenbrook and Stolze on March 24th, 1941,⁶¹ the Admiral immediately filed a document entitled 'Geplante Massnahmen des Amtes Ausland/Abwehr im Vorderen Orient'⁶² (Planned measures of the Abwehr Foreign Service in the Near East). It covered the following three Abwehr tasks: secret information service, sabotage and uprisings.

- (1) Canaris planned to develop a secret intelligence service in the whole of the Middle East, with emphasis on the special importance of information from Turkey, Syria, Egypt and Iraq. (It is known from other sources that the Admiral began to send agents at that time to Iraq.)
- (2) He proposed to perpetrate acts of sabotage mainly in Palestine, probably counting on co-operation from the Mufti. In the report prepared for Ribbentrop the Abwehr chief enumerated plans for

sabotage: power-houses, pumping-stations, the Kirkuk-Haifa pipeline,* factories and public utilities such as water mains, electricity, etc. In the event of Great Britain taking measures against Iraq, Canaris planned to sabotage the supply lines of the British troops.

(3) He suggested stirring up uprisings against the British in Palestine and Transjordan. The Abwehr command believed that such revolts would occur automatically as soon as weapons were supplied. Canaris believed that such deliveries would be possible when German troops occupied Thrace and the port of Salonika. From there convoys of arms would sail to Palestine via Turkish territorial waters. But he saw no immediate possibility of providing aid to anti-British rebels in Iraq, and was sceptical about sending the air-force general, Felmy, there secretly. Canaris promised to aid the efforts of the Auswärtiges Amt to supply Iraq through Japan, for the Abwehr had agents among highly placed personalities in Japan and in her Berlin Embassy. But the Germans did not limit themselves to Japan; they continued their efforts to ship arms to Iraq also by way of Turkey, camouflaged as goods consigned to Iran or Afghanistan.

Permanent contacts were established between the Auswärtiges Amt and the Abwehr on Middle East affairs. In the political department of the former these matters were entrusted to Melchers, with the provision that Grobba would also be involved in case of need.

The following were the decisions on Syria: firstly, German representation was to be established there in the form of a liaison group with the Italian Cease-Fire Control Commission for the Levant. Ribbentrop ordered that 'feelers' should carefully be put out to establish the Italian position on the above without disclosing the name of the German candidate to head the liaison group. The candidate was von Hentig.

Secondly, it was decided to demand jointly with the Italians that the Vichy Government should remove six people from the Syria administration to whom the Germans took exception. 63 These were: Conti, director of the political department of the French High Commission; Roger Chambard, director of the Press and Censorship Bureau; Spiro, director of the Bureau de Ravitaillement (these three held ministerial posts); Captain Meyer, liaison officer in charge of bedouin tribal affairs; Fouqueneauld, Commissioner for the Damascus district, and Captain Blondel, recent chief of the Services Spéciaux in the Alawite territory (i.e. in Latakia, North-West Syria). All of

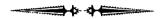
^{*} The sabotage of the pipeline was not very effective, since it was repaired unusually fast. The Kirkuk-Haifa pipeline has five pumping stations, two of which are in Transjordan and three in Iraq. The second branch of the pipeline ending at Tripoli was not in operation from the time of the fall of France to the occupation of the countries of the Levant by British and Gaullist troops.

these were charged with maintaining relations with Great Britain and contact with British leaders.

In this way the basic policy towards the Arab countries was adopted and many important steps on detailed questions were taken. If it is considered that up till that time the Germans had conducted virtually no activity in the Arab countries because of the possibility of adverse Italian reaction, then it must be concluded that the situation was now radically different. But German decisions clearly could not keep pace with the rapid development of the situation in the Arab countries, especially in Iraq.

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VIII UPRISING IN IRAQ



THE COUP D'ÉTAT IN BAGHDAD

POLITICAL crisis erupted in Iraq at the end of March 1941 which again could not be resolved by constitutional means and another military *coup* took place. We have already mentioned that General Taha el-Hashimi's Government was overthrown on April 1st by the same four colonels of the Golden Square who had supported his candidacy two months earlier. Rashid Ali again became Prime Minister.

Internally the crisis stemmed from the continuous lack of confidence and the strained relations between the Regent and the four colonels; the former being anxious to break the colonels' grip on the army.²

The contradictions of Taha el-Hashimi's position were bound to come to light during his Premiership. He was the brother of Yasin el-Hashimi, Premier of Iraq in 1935–6, who had been overthrown by the military coup of General Bekr Sidqi. Yasin professed Pan-Arabist views and his nationalist activity earned him the title 'the Arabian Bismarck'. Rashid Ali el-Kilani was Minister of Internal Affairs in his Government. Taha el-Hashimi shared his brother's Pan-Arabist views. He always expressed great sympathy for the four colonels whom he regarded as his pupils. He was a great admirer, too, of Germany and her army. This is probably why both Germany and Great Britain considered Taha el-Hashimi's Government as a continuation of Rashid Ali's though a little more cautious.

At the same time Taha el-Hashimi had strong ties with Nuri Said, leading representative of the pro-British camp, whose policies the Premier often supported. As a consequence, contradictions often arose between his ideas and his political measures. Maurice Petersen, Sir Basil Newton's predecessor as Britain's Ambassador to Iraq, considered Taha to be a person of limited intelligence.³ It seems, however, that el-Hashimi's position was not only determined by his

personal traits. It was shaped, to no small degree, by the immature and unformed political trends in Iraq.

Under pressure from the Regent, Taha el-Hashimi made timid efforts, after he had taken over, to persuade individual members of the Golden Square to transfer from Baghdad to provincial garrisons.⁴ Then the four colonels got the impression, at a meeting of higher army officers (in Taha's home) at the end of February, that the Premier planned to sever diplomatic relations with Italy.⁵ By the end of March the relationship between el-Hashimi and the four officers had entirely changed, for the Regent had persuaded him to transfer Kamel Shabib, the least influential of the Golden Square, to another post (March 26th, 1941).⁶ The four colonels compelled the Premier to cancel the order; they now knew that the Regent was their decided opponent and that they could not count on el-Hashimi.

To be the actual ruler of the country the Regent had to break up the Golden Square. But, as we shall see, the initiative in this matter was not entirely in his hands. Aware of the situation, the four colonels, allied with civilian political extremists, organised a comspiracy against the Government.

On February 28th, Salah ed-Din es-Sabbagh, Fahmi Said and Mahmud Salman of the Golden Square, Rashid Ali el-Kilani, Yunis es-Sebawi, Naji Shawkat and Hajj Amin met at the latter's residence (Zahawi Street, Baghdad). All present swore on the Koran and adopted their grandfathers' names as conspiratorial pseudonyms.* El-Ĥuseini was chosen leader of the group, for he was very close to the Golden Square and the link between Rashid Ali and the military clique.8 The conspirators decided not to permit any further concessions to Great Britain or the breaking off of relations with Italy. They resolved to expel the most prominent pro-British politicians from the country, to remove Taha el-Hashimi if he refused to agree with the above and to form a new Government headed by el-Kilani.9 A secret committee was thus set up which met frequently and prepared a coup d'état. After the victory of the coup all the more important questions of Government policy were discussed by that committee.

^{*} According to Shawkat's report contained in a letter to Hajj Amin, September 30th, 1942—the Arab text in 992/304455. Also Salah ed-Din es-Sabbagh (Fursan al-uruba fi al-Iraq—Knights of Arabism in Iraq—Damascus, 1956, Part III, Ch. XII, pp. 218–20) discusses the meeting of February 28th, 1941. Es-Sabbagh, however, does not give the names, only the pseudonyms of the participants: Mustafa (Mufti), Abd el-Aziz (Rashid Ali), Ahmed (Naji Shawkat), Raduan (es-Sabbagh), Farhud (Yunis es-Sabawi), Jasem (Fahmi Said) and Faris (Mahmud Salman). According to Mufti and Shawkat letters, Fahmi Said's psuedonym was 'Najm'. In our opinion this was the first meeting of that group of conspirators (see pp. 265–6).

The conspirators decided to act on March 31st, the day of the closing session of Parliament. On the evening of April 1st the army was alerted, the Premier was handed an ultimatum and the Regent's palace was surrounded. Taha el-Hashimi had no intention of collaborating with Rashid Ali and the Regent escaped from Baghdad with the aid of the American envoy. 10 He first went to Basra, then, under threat of Rashid Ali's order of arrest, he hid on a British warship on the Shatt el-Arab. From there he proceeded to Amman, where he joined his uncle Abd Allah, Emir of Transjordan. Many prominent Iraqi politicians supporting Great Britain took refuge there: Nuri es-Said, Jamil el-Midfai, Ali Jawdat and others. There was no formal possibility in this situation of establishing constitutional Government in Iraq. Rashid Ali and his friends had to create a Government of national defence and apply a number of unconstitutional measures. 11

INTERNATIONAL CAUSES OF THE COUP

The events in Iraq cannot be regarded as due solely to inner political entanglements, more or less normal to young states bereft of the traditions of constitutional government. Actually the *coup d'état* was accomplished in a period of highly important war developments, and was closely bound up with the policies of the Axis Powers and of their opponents.

March 1941 was a month of enlivened German political and military activity in the Balkans. German troops had been in Rumania since October 1940 and Bulgaria, who joined the Tripartite Pact, was occupied on March 1st, 1941. The Yugoslav Government capitulated under pressure and also acceded to the Tripartite Pact on March 24th. But the Cvetković Government was overthrown three days later by the opponents of the Axis. Hitler attacked Yugoslavia and Greece on April 6th. In North Africa this was a period of heightened Luftwaffe activity and of the success of Rommel's first counter-attack (March 31st). As for the camp of the Axis opponents, the Foreign Minister, Anthony Eden, was in the Balkans and the Middle East from February 19th to the end of March. Among other commitments, he was directed to handle the questions of Iraq, Palestine or Arabia.12 Tawfik es-Suweidi, the Foreign Minister in the el-Hashimi Government, met Eden in Cairo on March 6th, 1941. It may be concluded from various reports that the conversations to a great extent contributed to the perpetration of the anti-British coup d'état in

Iraq's Ankara envoy, Rashid Ali's brother, informed von Papen early in April that the four colonels had organised a coup d'état

because of their dissatisfaction with the concessions made to England by Tawfik es-Suweidi.¹³ The April 3rd despatch from the Mufti's private secretary to the Italian Foreign Minister regarding the initialling of an agreement between Eden and Iraq's Foreign Minister relayed similar news.¹⁴

Information on the contents of the conversation between Suweidi and Eden reached Auswärtiges Amt also through secret sources. The two Ministers were said to have discussed the following questions: the severing of diplomatic relations between Iraq and Italy; the occupation of certain areas of Iraq by British troops; the activity of British political, espionage and propaganda agencies; the inclusion in the Government of three or four Ministers who were loval to Great Britain. 15 The Japanese envoy at Baghdad reported that the English demanded the resignation of the Taha el-Hashimi Government and the formation of a pro-British Cabinet. 16 The Hungarian chargé d'affairs at Cairo reported to his Government that Eden had also demanded the retirement of many Iraqi higher officers and that this demand was the direct cause of the coup d'état.¹⁷ The Italian envoy cabled from Baghdad on April 4th that Eden had proposed joint action by the British and Iraqi armies against Syria 'for the purpose of liberating their Syrian brothers'. According to Gabrielli, Suweidi and the Regent agreed to that proposition—although it would be a pretext for bringing British troops into Iraq. 18

American representatives in Cairo19 and Baghdad20 also made reports on the Eden-Suweidi conversations. According to them, Tawfik es-Suweidi had come to Cairo on Eden's invitation. Their conversations were said to have dealt with the co-operation, or rather the lack of it, between Iraq and Great Britain, military intervention in politics and the severance of diplomatic relations with Italy. The American reports do not directly confirm that Eden demanded a change of Government and the dismissal of a number of officers. These reports maintain that Tawfik es-Suweidi recognised the difficulties of severing diplomatic relations with Italy and refused to commit himself as to when he would carry this out, because he considered that it would require time to overcome the opposition of the Iraqi army commanders. The Iraqi Foreign Minister thought it would be easier for the public to accept concessions to Britain if certain additional provisions of the White Paper were implemented and if the Palestinian leaders were allowed to return.

These accounts are confirmed by the memoirs of Salah ed-Din es-Sabbagh (of the four Iraqi colonels), published posthumously in 1956 under the title 'Knights of Arabism in Iraq'. He relates that during a discussion with the higher army officers ('and that discussion of ours resulted from the meeting of Tawfik es-Suweidi, Iraqi

minister of Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Eden, the British Minister of Foreign Affairs'), Taha el-Hashimi stated: 'Iraq will have to be obedient to the will of England; this is what Mr. Eden demanded.'21 According to es-Sabbagh, Eden insisted on the severance of diplomatic relations with Italy and permission to concentrate British troops in Iraq. He is also said to have expressed his Government's dissatisfaction with the views of Iraq's army commanders.²² It further follows from es-Sabbagh's account that during the April discussions between the conspirators and the Taha el-Hashimi Government, Tawfik es-Suweidi took a particularly irreconcilable attitude, in contradistinction to the Premier.²³

It would follow from these accounts—although it is not confirmed by any known British source—that the *coup d'état* was caused by the agreement between Anthony Eden and Tawfik es-Suweidi. The Golden Square and their civil allies feared that at best they would be relegated to the background by this agreement, and that Iraq would be drawn into the war on the side of Great Britain, whom they regarded both as being their enemy and as being on the losing side. Be that as it may, the attempt on March 26th to remove Kamel Shabib (es-Suweidi had returned to Baghdad on the 17th) confirmed the fears of the Golden Square.

In his despatch to the Italian Foreign Minister, Hajj Amin's private secretary points to still another cause of the *coup d'état*: 'Primarily as a result of the favourable news of the Berlin conversations, which I was able to convey, the Iraqi army decided to seize power and entrust Kilani with forming a new Government.'24

It was natural for Haddad to refer to his Berlin conversations as being among the causes of the coup. Of course, he wanted to make the opposite party morally obligated and to induce greater efforts in aiding Iraq. His statement is, however, not without a probable basis in fact. For the Golden Square and Rashid Ali had to rely on something in perpetrating the second coup d'état. El-Kilani, for one, knew quite well what the English thought of him and how they would react to the news that he had driven the mainstay of British influence, the Regent, out of the country and that he was Premier again. He probably reckoned on diplomatic bargaining, but presumably also entertained the hope that Iraq would manage to resist the British and that the Axis would not refuse him aid. The news conveyed from Berlin by Haddad strengthened the conviction of Rashid Ali and his confederates that the Axis wielded tremendous power and that their victory was assured. But even if it is assumed that Rashid Ali held more cautious views regarding the immediate developments of events in Iraq, his military accomplices certainly had great faith in Germany's strength, and the war developments of

April 1941 tended to confirm their assessment of the situation.* The new Government wanted to legalise the state of affairs which resulted from the coup d'état. Parliament was convened on April 10th and ninety-four out of the 118 members attended, but the opponents of the Golden Square now lacked the strength and courage to come forward. The opponents of the coup were clearly isolated and the arrest of a number of top officials, including the Mutasarrif of Basra, 25 frightened the adherents of Great Britain. On Kilani's proposal Parliament ousted Emir Abd ul-Illah and appointed as Regent in his place Sherif Sharaf of the royal family. A participant in the Arab revolt during World War I, 26 Sherif Sharaf was a presentable personality, but without much significance.

The new Regent confirmed the resignation of Taha el-Hashimi and charged Rashid Ali with forming a new Government. Rashid Ali took the Premiership and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Naji es-Suweidi (Tawfik's brother) became Finance Minister; Naji Shawkat, Defence; Musa Shabandar (a higher official of the Foreign Ministry and supporter of Rashid Ali), Foreign Affairs; Ali Mahmud esh-Sheikh Ali (well-known lawyer and Hitler sympathiser, former Minister in the Hikmet Suleiman Government, i.e. the Ministry formed as a result of the first putsch), justice; Muhammed Ali Mahmud (a former Minister of the same Government), communications; Yunis es-Sebawi (one of the leaders of the coup, well-known nationalist lawyer and translator of Mein Kampf) got the portfolio of Minister of Economy, and the friend of Rashid Ali, Ruuf el-Bahrani, became Minister of Social Affairs.†

The new Government secured the support of the nationalist clubs

* Haddad more than once underlines in his memoirs that Rashid Ali and the politicians connected with him considered the situation in Europe as unclear, particularly in view of the worsening German-Soviet relations. And that they were, as a result, supposedly advocates of a more cautious policy towards England. But Salah ed-Din es-Sabbagh presents a different view in his memoirs. He claims that he and the other military leaders were sure of a British defeat. We are inclined to accept Sabbagh's version, though it is not ruled out that there were certain differences between the policies of Rashid Ali and those of the Golden Square, or some of its members. Es-Sabbagh's memoirs elicit greater confidence, seem to be more candid and were written towards the end of the war at the latest (since he was hanged in Baghdad in October 1945). Besides, to accept that Haddad presented truthfully the views of Rashid Ali and the other Baghdad politicians, it would have to be assumed that they possessed much greater knowledge and understanding of prevailing international relations than did the majority of statesmen at the time, on the one hand, and that they were entirely bereft of a sense of patriotism and responsibility for the fate of their fatherland, on the other.

† M. Khadduri, *Independent Iraq*, London, 1960, p. 216. Ettel's despatch, Teheran, April 14th, 1941—792/273082; Grobba's notes, Berlin April 16th, 1941—792/273083—4. There had been a lack of true information in Berlin before that on the composition of the Iraqi Government.

and many tribal chiefs. Nationalist circles outside Iraq also expressed support for the el-Kilani Government.²⁷ This applied first of all to Syria and Lebanon, where the Arab nationalists were able to express their views on the matter. So did a number of Egyptian leaders,²⁸ and by the middle of May Aziz Ali el-Masri tried to escape from the country, probably to Iraq.²⁹

The key to the situation, however, was held neither by Iraq nor by any other Arab country, but by the Great Powers.

BRITISH POLICY IN IRAQ (APRIL 1941)

The coup d'état in Iraq took place at a time of continued Axis victories and of the deterioration of Britain's military situation. On April 6th German troops, assisted by their Italian and Hungarian allies, launched military operations in the Balkans. The Yugoslav army capitulated on the 17th and the Greek Epirus army on the 24th. On the 28th the Germans occupied Athens. The whole Balkan campaign was concluded by May 1st, and Nazi forces reached the sea, on the opposite coast of which lay the Arab countries.

The proximity in time between the Iraq coup d'état and the German attack on Yugoslavia and Greece was not regarded as accidental in British and American circles; they considered that Rashid Ali had co-ordinated his moves with Berlin.³⁰ But many prominent politicians and military leaders did not share that opinion.³¹

Germany's new North Africa command launched an attack on the British positions at el-Ageila on March 31st. Benghazi fell on April 4th and on the 10th German tanks appeared at Sollum on the Egyptian border. Within twelve days Rommel had regained the ground it had taken Wavell fifty days to win. Only Tobruk, stubbornly defended by Australian units, General Kopański's Polish brigade, British Guards units and South African detachments, continued to be a formidable road block to the Axis offensive. Great Britain suffered heavy losses in men and equipment in Greece and the Western Desert. The situation was very difficult and President Roosevelt anticipated a British withdrawal from the Middle East. 32 But Churchill had no intention of surrendering an area that was so important to the Empire. He concentrated additional forces there and asked for increased aid from the United States.

In this situation Iraq acquired a greater importance than ever for the British. Her oil resources complemented the fuel reserves of Iran. Besides, she was an important transit stage for the transport of troops from Australia, New Zealand and India to North Africa. True, Churchill calculated that the whole force of Germany would

soon switch in another direction, towards the Soviet Union,³³ but there were many indications that the Middle East might become the next target of a major Nazi offensive.³⁴

From the end of March Basra assumed special importance in British plans as a port of landing for American supplies, particularly aeroplanes.³⁵

Despite the Axis victories, the German armies were still far from Iraq, and Britain's were near. Rashid Ali hence tried to find a modus vivendi with the British authorities and attempted, at all events, to put off the approaching conflict. He reckoned that the British Government would not want to antagonise the Arab nationalists for fear that a conflict with Iraq would arouse an unfavourable reaction not only in the Arab world but among Muslims generally.* It is now known that there were differences of opinion among British leaders on Iraq policy at the time. While some, including the Prime Minister, advocated armed intervention, others, including General Wavell—then Commander-in-Chief of the Middle East forces—were of the opinion that an understanding should be sought with the Iraqi Government, since it was not possible then to open a new war front.³⁶

The coup d'état coincided with the arrival of a new British Ambassador, Sir Kinahan Cornwallis, who had worked at the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Baghdad from the founding of modern Iraq until 1935. In that year Rashid Ali—as Minister of Internal Affairs in the Ikha el-Watani party Government—had removed him from the post of adviser. There was hence no lack of personal animosity between them in 1941. Cornwallis assumed that Rashid Ali and the Golden Square were playing for time by negotiating with Great Britain as long as the Axis was not able to intervene directly.† He first of all failed to present his credentials, thus indicating that Great Britain did not recognise the régime, the legality of which was at least doubtful.‡ In fact, London had its Iraqi supporters gathered

* Italian envoy's report, Baghdad, April 4th, 1941—83/61099–100. The Shiite holy places are located in Iraq.

† See Freya Stark, op. cit., p. 141. The Iraqi envoy at Ankara stated to Kroll that his Government must be evasive until the development of operations in Egypt made possible a more definite stand against England (Kroll's despatch, Ankara, April 22nd, 1941—83/61596).

‡ It was very important to el-Kilani that his Government should be recognised by Great Britain. Through the good offices of C. J. Edmonds and Jamil Mardam, he offered far-reaching concessions to the British Ambassador for recognition. Rashid Ali was ready publicly to disclaim contact with Germany. He promised to take steps towards severing relations with Italy and to accept the status quo in Palestine and Syria to the end of the war. But Cornwallis did not accept the propositions, probably assuming that el-Kilani only wanted to gain time (Knabenshue to the State Secretary, Baghdad, April 2nd, 7th, 10th, 1941—FRUS, 1941,

at Amman, preparing to form a new Government, claiming constitutional legitimacy, to challenge el-Kilani. Rashid Ali was hence compelled to solicit recognition, which tempered his inclination for an open conflict with Great Britain. For their part, the English were primarily concerned with neutralising, as much as possible, the opposition to the landing of troops at Basra, with maintaining their air bases at Habbaniya and Shuaiba and with preventing the interruption of oil deliveries by pipeline to Haifa.

British troops had landed many times in the past in Iraq on their way to Palestine and Egypt. With the Axis offensive in North Africa there was now a greater need than ever to reinforce the British troops in Palestine and Egypt. For they were seriously depleted by the despatch of an expeditionary corps to Greece and by the fact that the Germans had captured a considerable number of them. Moreover, the British command was concerned with stationing troops in Iraq, not only because of the emergence of a distinctly unfriendly attitude there: German superiority in the air and on the Aegean Sea meant that the communications line to Turkey via Iraq was very important.³⁷

The Iraqi Government had from the outset feared the occupation of the country by British troops in transit through Mesopotamia.³⁸ With his public declaration of April 3rd that he would respect all Iraq's international obligations,* Rashid Ali could not very well prohibit the landing of British troops, and therefore sought some compromise. Cornwallis decided to take advantage of the situation. With his Government's consent³⁹ he applied on April 16th for permission for additional imperial units to march through Iraq.⁴⁰ Cornwallis then informed el-Kilani that as soon as Great Britain got unconditional approval to establish a communications route through Iraq London would immediately extend informal relations with, and after a while would fully recognise, his Government.⁴¹ 'In any case we consider that the presence of Imperial troops in Iraq can hardly fail to act as a stabilising factor in the situation',⁴² the British Foreign Office informed its Washington Embassy in reference to Cornwallis's conversation with Rashid Ali of April 16th.

* The text of this declaration made by el-Kilani in an address to the people is cited by Haddad (op. cit., pp. 103-4) from the *Iraq Times* of April 4th, 1941. In this address Rashid Ali concretised the Government's programme with the following points: attempt to spare the country the dangers of war, fulfilment of Iraq's national mission, attachment to all international obligations, continued friendly relations with the neighbouring Arab states.

Vol. III, Washington, 1959, pp. 493-8). An indirect and partial confirmation of this is to be found in es-Sabbagh (op. cit., pp. 237-8).

Whether el-Kilani fully acceded to the request of the British Ambassador is not known. According to British accounts, it would seem that he did.* But German and Italian sources (based on the conversations of Iraqi representatives with Axis agents at Baghdad and Ankara) claimed that el-Kilani hedged his agreements with a number of reservations and conditions.† Thus the Iraqis stated that Rashid Ali had resorted to the agreement of July 20th, 1940, which provided for the right to land troops, but prohibited their being stationed in Iraq and the establishment of British military camps.‡ Moreover, el-Kilani was said to have stipulated that the number of British troops in the country's territory should not exceed 3,000 at one time.§ According to the same source, the British Ambassador expressed dissatisfaction, but London finally accepted the above conditions on April 18th.⁴³

There is no doubt, however, that the Iraqi Government, in its note of April 19th, agreed to the landing of imperial troops at Basra, but under the condition that they proceeded as rapidly as possible to Rutba and that the British Government announced well in advance any intention to ship any more detachments. The Iraqi Government also demanded that the total number of British troops should not exceed, at any one time, the strength of one mixed brigade and that

* Foreign Office to Washington Embassy, London, April 17th, 1941—FRUS, op. cit., p. 501. Khadduri (op. cit., p. 219), who had access to Cornwallis's despatches, also maintains that Rashid Ali accepted Britain's demands of April 16th, but changed his position later under army pressure. The same formulation appears in the Foreign Office despatch and Khadduri's account, namely, that Rashid Ali accepted the demand to open a route through Iraq 'in accordance with the provisions of the Anglo-Iraqi treaty'. On this point the treaty had been differently interpreted by London and Baghdad.

† Bismarck to AA, Rome, April, 19th, 1941—83/61577-8. Also notes of Italian Embassy, Berlin, April 19th, 1941—83/71111-14; Kroll to Ribbentrop, Ankara, April 21st, 1941—83/61127. It should be noticed that none of these notes was written before April 19th. The contradictory versions of the Iraqi Government's position also appeared in the press. (See *Reuter's* of April 19th, 1941, and *Frankfurter Zeitung* of April 23rd, 1941).

‡ See above, p. 80. G. Kirk (*The Middle East in the War*, London, 1954, pp. 68-69) denies that such an understanding existed. He maintains that in the note of July 16th, 1940, the Iraqi Government unilaterally decided to violate some of its obligations under the Anglo-Iraqi treaty.

§ According to Italian Embassy notes, Berlin, April 19th, 1941—83/61111-14; Ettel's despatch, Tehran, April 24th, 1941—83/61607. Knabenshue puts the matter differently when he states (letter to the State Secretary, Baghdad, April 29th, 1941, FRUS, op. cit., pp. 501-2) that el-Kilani did not want the number of troops to exceed the 8,000 then present in the country. But there is no confirmation of the Ankara despatch (probably based on the information of the Iraqi envoy there) of a demand that the British troops march through without arms (Von Papen to AA, Ankara, April 7th, 1941—83/61557; Kroll to Ribbentrop, Ankara, April 21st, 1941—83/61123).

no more units should land at Basra as long as there were still some British troops in the country.⁴⁴

Meanwhile imperial troops landed at Basra on April 17th and 18th. According to Churchill's instructions the English stopped reporting the number of troops and their movements to Iraqi authorities. ⁴⁵ And Berlin, incidentally, now lacked these data. On April 23rd, 1941, the number of British troops in Iraq was estimated at from 6,000 to 7,000. ⁴⁷ The 'Abteilung für fremde Heere' of the Wehrmacht General Staff cited a higher figure, calculating that at the end of April two Indian divisions of 14,000 men each arrived in Iraq and were to be followed by two more. The British air force was estimated by the Germans at some 160 warplanes. ⁴⁸ However that may be, one thing was clear: the number of British troops exceeded the limit fixed by the Iraqi Government and more contingents were on their way to Basra. ⁴⁹

Furthermore, it seems that Great Britain gradually changed her intentions in Iraq as her military situation in the Eastern Mediterranean worsened. At the beginning, instructions to Cornwallis related only to British troops marching through and not to their being stationed in Iraq.⁵⁰ On April 20th Churchill ordered that the Ambassador at Baghdad should be informed that the British Government wished to establish a large troop concentration base at Basra, but was not at all interested in the interior of the country, except for Habbaniya.⁵¹ But Eden was reported to have said as early as April 23rd that British troops were to defend the oil deposits situated far in the north of Iraq. 52 On the 28th of that month the British Embassy asked for permission to land an additional 3,500 men at Basra, although the forces previously landed had not left the country. The Ambassador justified this demand by the need to guard the imperial communication lines traversing Iraq.53 The British thus informed el-Kilani that they aimed to organise a military route through Iraq of a permanent nature. It was as much as saying that London had decided to pay no attention to the Iraqi conditions and stipulations.

THE AXIS AND IRAQ'S DEMANDS

Baghdad assured the Germans on about April 20th that the British troops would not remain in the country. ⁵⁴ Rashid Ali and his adherents probably understood that there was no chance of getting any aid from the Axis if they were convinced that Iraq was virtually an occupied country. But Turkish officials ⁵⁵ and the Italian Legation ⁵⁶ at Baghdad gave the Germans an entirely different idea of that matter.

The Axis Powers now resolved to take up an official position on the Iraqi developments. The Italian Government prepared a draft

communiqué to be presented to the Iraqi Government by the envoy, Gabrielli,⁵⁷ which the Germans criticised as 'too mild'. The Italians then accepted Woermann's text,⁵⁸ according to which Gabrielli was to communicate to el-Kilani, in the names of both Governments, that they followed his actions with sympathy, but that they advised him to resist Britain with arms when the balance of forces offered a chance of success. The Axis Powers, stated the communiqué, were preparing active assistance with arms and ammunition as well as finances, and they hoped to master the transportation difficulties. The Germans were really at that time energetically exploring the possibilities of shipping arms and Ribbentrop got Hitler's promise that he would put at Iraq's disposal various types of arms.⁵⁹

The Iraqi Government took favourable note of the Axis communiqué and accepted the offer of arms and financial assistance. When the British troops landed at Basra, Rashid Ali turned to the Italian envoy with the following questions: Could Iraq count on the immediate aid of the Axis air forces? Could the Axis deliver arms by air as was done in Norway? Could Iraq rely on immediate financial assistance? Several days later the Iraqi Government and army commanders, probably under the influence of the news that further contingents of British troops were due at Basra, again enquired about the Axis position and declared that, in their opinion, England was preparing to occupy the country. 62

These were clear appeals for Axis support, including military aid.* In a conversation with the Italian envoy on April 23rd Rashid Ali and the Mufti expressed their chagrin at not having received aid from the Axis air forces. It thus turned out that el-Kilani had asked for aid from the Axis even before April 28th, that is, before Britain had made it clear that she intended to occupy the country. One of the factors influencing Great Britain to take up an irreconcilable attitude to the Iraqi Government was her knowledge of the ties between Rashid Ali and the Axis, since Gabrielli's telegrams from Baghdad were deciphered by British intelligence.† It was no longer possible for the

* Auswärtiges Amt documents contradict the statement of M. Khadduri in the first edition of his book, *Independent Iraq* (London 1951, p. 195), that Rashid Ali had directed Naji Shawkat to ask for German military aid when he visited Ankara in May. Khadduri probably got this information from N. Shawkat. Some other information Khadduri got from that source is also contradicted by German documents. In the second edition of the cited book he gives a different version of this information (p. 229): 'When Rashid Ali's airforce was destroyed by the RAF and he failed to persuade the 4 colonels to accept mediation, he appealed to Germany for military help . . .'

† Meldung für den Führer (Report for the Führer), Vienna, April 21st, 1941—DGFP, XII, no. 377, London 1963, pp. 592-4. The code of a third country which the Germans deciphered showed that the English were reading the despatches of

the Italian envoy at Baghdad.

British Government to regard Iraq's opposition to the landing of British troops as due exclusively to concern for the sovereignty of the young state. Nor could they now regard the relation between the two states as a conflict between imperial contingency and native nationalist feelings.⁶³

On April 28th the Italian envoy submitted to his Government Iraq's detailed list of financial and military demands. 64 They came to 3 million ID (Iraq dinar, equal to one pound sterling) monthly, for in a war with England Iraq would lose her income from customs and oil royalties, while incurring serious expenditures on military operations and in winning over the tribes. El-Kilani proposed that Axis aircraft bombard British naval units in the Persian Gulf and the bases of Habbaniya and Shuaiba. They could use the airfields at Mosul, Baghdad, Mikdadia and the petrol supposedly stored in Iraq. He also asked the Axis for 10 squadrons of planes, 50 light armoured cars, 400 armour-piercing guns of .500 calibre with 80,000 cartridges, 60 armour-piercing cannon of 46 calibre with 60,000 rounds of ammunition, 10,000 hand grenades, 600 light machine-guns type B80, calibre ·303, 84 heavy Vickers machine-guns of ·303 calibre and 3 million bullets. This time the Arab leaders did not require any declaration from the Axis on the future of the Arab countries, although the Pan-Arabist aspirations played such an important part in the Iraqi coup d'état.

As indicated above, the Germans had no elaborated military or political plans for Iraq when the *coup d'état* took place. Now it was entirely a question of military plans, for political promises had held little meaning since the *coup* of April 1st, 1941. From the role of sellers with something to offer, Rashid Ali and el-Huseini now turned into suppliants with hat in hand. The Axis Powers, however, particularly Germany, were now engaged elsewhere. The troops which invaded Yugoslavia and Greece could not push farther south or south-east, for they were massed at the Soviet borders. This to an extent explains why the Germans were so slow to act in Iraq in the first few weeks after the *coup*.

Halder's war diary provides some idea of the great difficulties that confronted the German command in allotting even small forces to Libya at that time. It is nevertheless strange that some Nazi leaders still entertained the hope at the end of April that the Iraqi Government would manage to defer a clash with England until it received adequate assistance from the Axis.⁶⁶ The Germans evidently knew that Britain was informed of el-Kilani's relations with the Axis. The delay in rendering assistance was perhaps to some degree due to a lingering fear that the Iraqi Government would capitulate,⁶⁷ or that

it was too late in view of the preponderance of British forces in that country.*

It is known, however, that Auswärtiges Amt and the Abwehr had never ceased to work on Arab problems, which undoubtedly indicates that Germany intended to make some use of Britain's difficulties in the Arab lands.

PROBLEM OF SUPPLYING IRAQ WITH ARMS

The provision of arms to Iraq continued to be the most important problem. As shown above, Ribbentrop overcame the previous difficulties and got Hitler's agreement to supply Iraq with all kinds of arms. 68 Keitel had, in fact, approved the arms specifications earmarked for Iraq† and the Abwehr arms to be consigned to Palestine.‡ Considerations of prestige and the need for continuing the war against Great Britain made a policy of complete passivity in the Arab countries inadvisable, though the Nazis felt the need to concentrate all they had on the Soviet fronts in the coming few months.

Which route should be used to deliver arms to Iraq still remained an open question. In this respect the situation had been much the same since the beginning of March. True, Salonika was now in German hands, but the port would not be fit for use until the second half of May or later. And it would be difficult even then to find the ships to carry arms to the Arab countries. ⁶⁹ The Abwehr proposed to smuggle the arms from Italian ports to the Levant shores to be transshipped from there by lorry through Syria to Iraq. ⁷⁰ But it became possible a little later to sail a small, 160-ton ship from Salonika to Syria. There the representative of the Abwehr, Roser,

- * Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 26th, 1941—DGFP, XII, no. 407, pp. 641–2. Colonel Brinckmann of the OKW informed him that such was Hitler's opinion.
- † Ripken's notes, Berlin, April 17th, 1941—792/273071-3. Broken down as follows: 15,000 infantry rifles, cal. 6.6 mm., Dutch production with 5 million bullets; 600 light machine-guns, cal. 6.5 mm., Dutch production with 6 million rounds of ammunition; 200 heavy machine-guns, cal. 0.8, with 2 million cartridges; 50 heavy grenade throwers, 81 mm. cal., of French manufacture with 25,000 projectiles, and 110 light grenade throwers, French manufacture, of 50 mm. cal., with 75,000 rounds.
- ‡ Ripken's notes, loc. cit., Davidsen's notes, Berlin, April 19th, 1941—792/273054. Specification: 15,000 rifles, 86/93, French model, cal. 8 mm. with 15 million cartridges; 200 light, captured machine-guns, 24/29, cal. 7·5 mm., with 800,000 rounds of ammunition; 30 grenade throwers French model, cal. 50 mm., with 15,000 missiles; 300 machine pistols, 18/1, German model, 8 mm. cal. and 600,000 bullets, cal. 9 mm.; 20,000 Norwegian hand grenades; 200 captured pocket pistols with 10,000 cartridges; 50 captured field glasses and 100 compasses. The original Abwehr demand for Palestine was somewhat larger and included armour-piercing weapons.

was to explore together with Shukri Quwatli, leader of the local nationalists, the possibility of secretly unloading and smuggling the arms to Palestine.⁷¹

Iraq, in the meantime, continued efforts to get Japanese arms. German officials raised this question with the Japanese Ambassador to Berlin, Oshima, and with the Foreign Minister, Matsuoka, during his visit to Berlin.⁷² But the transport of arms from far-off Japan would take a couple of months and Basra, Iraq's only port, was in English hands.⁷³ A transport through Turkey, camouflaged as a goods shipment destined for Afghanistan or Iran, would also require about two months,⁷⁴ and would need the co-operation of the Afghan or Iranian authorities. Abdul Majid-Khan, Afghani Minister of Economics, invited his country's Ambassador to Ankara, Faiz Muhammed-Khan, to Budapest for a meeting on this question, but he warned that his monarch must be informed of any plans to ship to Iraq transports destined for Afghanistan.⁷⁵

Under definite orders from Hitler and Ribbentrop, efforts were then concentrated on supplying Iraq with transports seemingly destined for Iran.* Three transports of arms were to be sent to Iran, each composed of parts and not of complete pieces. It was expected to insure in this manner against them being seized and used by some other country. Only after receiving all the three transports would the Iranians be able to assemble arms fit for use. The first transport arrived; the second waited at Galati to be forwarded to Iran, while the third was to leave Germany in a few days. This third part (three car-loads weighing 300 tons) was to remain in Iraq. It was, of course, to be put together differently and to be shipped from Germany in complete pieces. 76 It was no longer possible to change the second transport, since the Iranians knew what it was and were always on the spot. A new difficulty arose when the Iranian authorities, at the request of 'Wi Rü Amt' (Office of Armaments Economy), agreed that the second and third transports would not be moved by railway through Turkey and Iraq, but by ship to Trabzon and from there by lorry to Iran.⁷⁷ The Germans first wanted to keep their plans secret from the Iranians. In this connection Oberlieutenant Lengner of Wi Rü Amt had a conversation on April 23rd, 1941, with Humayun of the Iranian legation at Berlin; he promised the rapid despatch of the third and last arms transport. Humayun in turn promised to put to his superiors at Tehran the question of changing the route agreed upon.⁷⁸ The impossibility of keeping these plans secret from the

^{*} The following remark by Ribbentrop appeared in Woermann's notes (Berlin, April 21st, 1941—83/61121-3): 'The Fuhrer saw the notes. I told Woermann over the telephone that proposition 1 (transport to Iran-LH) should at once be realised.'

Iranians was probably finally acknowledged. Ettel, the Reich envoy at Tehran, attempted to get Iran's agreement to the plan, or to persuade her to supply Iraq with arms in some other manner.⁷⁹ But Ettel did not expect that the matter would be arranged satisfactorily,⁸⁰ and what is more, the Germans came to realise that this was a slow way of getting arms to Iraq, after all.⁸¹

It was finally decided to transport arms by air, as suggested by Rashid Ali,82 for the Germans recognised that they could render rapid assistance only by air.83 However, because the army did not display much enthusiasm about fighting in Iraq,84 Ribbentrop wanted to arrange the arms deal without informing the military command, and only in the last stage to check the details with Wehrmacht representatives.85 The directors of Auswärtiges Amt attempted to convince Hitler that the military circles' scepticism on eventual action in Iraq was unfounded.*

When asked about the possibility of aiding Iraq, Luftwaffe General Jeschonnek replied evasively that helping Iraq with Luftwaffe squadrons was out of the question, since the distance exceeded the range of German planes. Junkers could be used to transport arms, but only on condition that they landed in Syria. The calibre 4.7 cannon was the heaviest weapon that could be shipped that way, and Iraq could thus be supplied with anti-armour guns. But the Luftwaffe command made the reservation that they had few machines available for such tasks. 86 Considering the German authorities' reluctance to use Syrian airfields, 87 this answer must be considered as more negative than positive. 88 In order to push the matter Ribbentrop wrote to Luftwaffe Commander-in-Chief Goering.† The letter was probably sent towards the end of April.

As a result of all these efforts a conference was held on April 24th in which the anticipated action in Iraq was discussed with the Luftwaffe command. It was agreed that arms for Iraq would be consigned to the Luftwaffe at Salonika, but no actual date was set for carrying this out. It was also decided that the flights would be made on a route Salonika-Iraq, without landing in Syria; information on the Iraqi airports and fuel supplies available would be gathered at

* In the Notes to the Führer, for instance (Vienna, April 27th, 1941—DGFP XII, no. 415, pp. 655-6), Ribbentrop denied the information of the military command regarding the number of British troops in Iraq.

† The letter was not to be found either among the Wilhelmstrasse deeds captured by the Allies, or in the documents turned over by the U.S.S.R. to the East German Government. It is referred to in Kramarz's notes (Berlin, May 16th, 1941—DGFP, XII, no. 528, pp. 833–5). According to these notes, the Luftwaffe understood the importance of assisting Iraq, even though the pro-fascists there had had no lasting success. 'A decisive fact in this connection', he wrote, 'was the Foreign Minister's personal letter to the Reichsmarschall [Goering].'

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Ankara; the transports would embrace 100 tons of arms, using five machines, each making ten flights.⁸⁹

At this stage the plan had to be referred to Hitler for his agreement. Auswärtiges Amt also wanted the military to consult Hitler⁹⁰ on this matter, in particular for Keitel to report to him.⁹¹ That Hitler was himself interested in assisting Iraq is attested by the telephone calls of the envoy, Hewel, and the Führer's headquarters.* The Foreign Minister provided Hitler with an extensive memorandum on Iraqi events,⁹² on April 27th. He stressed that the movement of British troops on Iraqi territory might turn the scales in North Africa and that Britain's aim was probably to gain a jumping-off position against Syria and to exert pressure on Turkey. The ultimate success of British policy in Turkey, it was easy to see, might have no small influence on the situation of the German troops fighting the Red Army. The question of assistance, especially military, to Iraq was also considered by the Italian General Staff.⁹³

DECISION TO AID IRAQ

On May 3rd Hitler agreed with Ribbentrop's proposition and expressed the wish that everything possible would be done to provide el-Kilani's Government with military assistance. He consented, too, to the transfer of some planes to Iraq, but under the condition that sufficient fuel would be available there to enable them to return to their bases.†

These decisions were preceded by others relating to the utilisation of Syrian airfields as stop-over points in flights to Iraq. Hitherto there had been a disinclination to use Syrian airfields, since it would have involved Vichy and Italian consent. Nevertheless, Auswärtiges Amt returned to that idea⁹⁴ after General Jeschonnek's reply. What is more, the Auswärtiges Amt administration projected a plan to assign the arms of Weygand's former army (these arms were stored in Syria under supervision of the Italian Armistice Control Commission) to the Iraqi Government and to the probable German troops coming to Iraq's aid via Syria.⁹⁵ Because the situation called for quick action and the other solutions involved technical difficulties, the Germans decided to use Syria as their base of operations.

On April 28th Ribbentrop addressed a letter to the chief of OKW,

^{*} Report to the Führer, Vienna, April 21st, 1941—DGFP, XII, no. 377, pp. 592-4. Hewel was the liaison officer between Hitler's headquarters and Wilhelmstrasse.

[†] Notiz für den Herrn RAM (Brief for the Foreign Minister), Berlin, May 3rd, 1941—DGFP, XII, no. 436, p. 690. Hewel asked in this note to be allowed to participate in discussions of Iraqi affairs.

Field-Marshal Keitel, 96 in which he proposed that Vichy should be granted permission to recommission seven French torpedo-boats and six destroyers. In return Vichy would be obligated to supply secretly German submarines and some merchant ships; remove French officials in Syria, Algeria, Morocco and French West Africa who were unacceptable to the Germans; turn over to Iraq arms from the Italian Control Commission stores in Syria; aid in supplying arms to Iraq and permit the landing of German planes on the way to Iraq. Ribbentrop wanted these matters to be arranged directly by Abetz with Darlan in Paris. At Wiesbaden, the news might leak out to Admiral Leahy, the United States Ambassador to Vichy (Wiesbaden was the headquarters of the German Armistice Commission). The Germans considered, not without foundation, that the leakages were due to the indiscretions of the French delegates at the German Armistice Commission, Ribbentrop further proposed, in this connection, that Keitel should send an OKW plenipotentiary to Paris. Keitel replied on May 3rd, that is on the same day that Hitler agreed to his Foreign Minister's proposition. He informed Ribbentrop that he had assigned General Vogl97 to the task.

It was thus decided to assist Iraq, despite the reservations of Auswärtiges Amt higher officials and the doubts of the military circles. Many documents suggest the conclusion that Ribbentrop wanted to use the Arab countries as an arena for the rivalry between Auswärtiges Amt and the military, especially the Abwehr. He even thought of establishing a special Auswärtiges Amt political intelligence service. With some reservations Hitler agreed with his Minister's propositions. It should be kept in mind that the decision to aid Iraq was made after hostilities had broken out there.

A decisive factor in the Nazis' decision to assist Iraq was their determination to establish a Mediterranean front, despite the campaign against the U.S.S.R. It was necessary to maintain a secondary front, since Italy's loss of North Africa threatened to change popular sentiment towards the régime of Germany's chief ally.⁹⁸ The goal Hitler had previously set himself, namely to paralyse Britain's forces in the Middle East, seemed unattainable. But it was not possible to withdraw from North Africa without exposing Hitler's 'Festung Europa' to attacks from the south. On the other hand, the Germans were afraid to send larger forces to the Middle East, because they needed to concentrate their whole potential on the Soviet fronts. Under the circumstances, even a diversion in Iraq, not to speak of seizing the control in that country, could have some significance.

Furthermore, aid to Iraq would have an important effect on extending ties with Arab nationalism in the other Arab countries as well. Certain Nazi officials, such as Ettel, for instance (the envoy at

Tehran), were of the opinion that aid to Iraq would promote a general revolt against British domination in the East. Germany entertained the illusion that uprisings would break out in Palestine and Transjordan. It is nevertheless true that the Iraqi events exerted a great influence on the other Arab countries. Egyptian leaders, for instance, made attempts to contact the Axis as a result of these events and of Rommel's victories—at least in equal measure. Through the mediation of his father-in-law, Zulficar-pasha (the Ambassador at Tehran), King Farouk approached Hitler with an offer of cooperation.99 The Abwehr maintained contact with the 'Architect', Aziz Ali el-Masri, who was ordered to move from Egypt to territory remaining under Axis control.* In Saudi Arabia, Ibn Saud's advisers were of the opinion that it was necessary to link up with the Axis. 100 Ignoring Iraq's plea for assistance would clearly weaken German prestige in the East. At the same time, aid inadequate to defeat the enemy would be a waste of strength from which only Britain would benefit and when her prestige in that part of the world was so seriously impaired. The Germans confronted the same kind of dilemma over Iraq as the British had had in Greece shortly before. 101 There is nothing strange therefore in the fact that while promising Iraq assistance the Germans stipulated from the outset that the entire operation should be kept strictly secret. They were simply reluctant to engage in such an uncertain undertaking.

On May 13th the question of Iraq was discussed by Ribbentrop and Mussolini at the Palazzo Venezia in the presence of Count Ciano. Ribbentrop wanted the Duce's agreement on co-operation with the Vichy Government in Syria and North Africa. He pointed out the significance an uprising in Iraq could have for the Axis Powers. 'If a sizeable arms shipment reached Iraq,' he said, 'air troops could then be brought into the area which could then, with the material on hand, advance against the English, and from Iraq, in certain circumstances, they could attack Egypt from the east.'

Mussolini agreed on the need to aid Iraq, since he considered that the opening of a new front against Britain, while fanning anti-English sentiments among the Arabs and Muslims in general, would benefit the Axis. He disclosed in the discussion that Italy had ready 5 planes loaded with arms, 400 machine-guns and 20 anti-tank guns, as well as 12 fighter planes detailed for Iraq. Mussolini was, how-

^{*} John E. W. Eppler, Rommel ruft Kairo—Aus den Tagebuch eines Spiones (Rommel Calling Cairo—From the Diary of a Spy), Bielefeld, 1959, pp. 25–28. Eppler should generally be taken with reservations, but on this point he is confirmed by Hans W. Steffen, Salaam, Geheimkommando zum Nil (Salaam, Secret Commando on the Nile) Neckargemünd, 1960, pp. 8–13, and Anwar El Sadat, Revolt on the Nile, London, 1957, pp. 35–38.

ever, of the opinion that aid to Iraq would bear proper fruit only if Crete and Cyprus had been conquered first, and if the French allowed planes and troops to land in Syria. He also supported the idea of attacking Egypt and pointed to the possibility of developing an offensive through Turkey or even by way of Syria and not via Iraq. It seems that Mussolini had in mind Middle East goals which were much more important and closer to him than Iraq, although he agreed to assist Rashid Ali's Government. On Ribbentrop's question as to how long Iraq's army would be able to resist England, the Duce replied that Rashid Ali believed his Government would be able to hold on if they got some war supplies; otherwise Iraq's resistance would be broken within three to four weeks.* The Italian dictator probably wished to emphasise that direct Axis action in the Middle East was indispensable.

It is significant that in this conversation Ribbentrop not only failed to mention the preparations for the invasion of the Soviet Union, but also actually assured Italy that 'the Führer . . . had in no way reached any decision' on the matter and that German forces were being concentrated at the Soviet borders merely as a countermeasure to the strengthening of the Red Army. Mussolini probably failed to be convinced, since he very cautiously pointed to the need for co-operation with the U.S.S.R. and warned that the entrance of the United States into the war against the Axis would be undesirable. Ciano noted in his Diary on May 6th that Mussolini was not as optimistic as formerly on the early conclusion of the war. Ciano was rather of the impression that the Duce would be inclined to accept a compromise peace, particularly if he were assured his share of the plunder. It may at any rate be concluded from his May 13th conversation with Ribbentrop that Mussolini preferred the Axis to be satisfied with the territories promised to Italy in the Eastern Mediterranean and to refrain from making new enemies.

HOSTILITIES IN IRAQ

The Iraqi situation soon cleared up. Convinced without doubt that Britain aimed to occupy the country, the Rashid Ali el-Kilani Government decided on armed resistance. In the last week of April Iraq's army tried to prevent the landing of British troops, but did not succeed. 102 A note was sent to Great Britain on April 29th rejecting her demands and protesting against any further landing of British troops. At the same time Iraqi soldiers stationed at Camp

* PS—1866, I.M.T., Vol. XXIX. Mussolini's statement regarding Italian planes being ready to aid Iraq turned out to be empty talk (*Ciano's Diary*, 1939–43, London, 1947, notes of May 30th, 1941).

Rashid, south of Baghdad, were ordered to encircle the British air base at Habbaniya;* this was carried out by 9,000 soldiers equipped with a considerable quantity of artillery.† On April 30th the besiegers ordered the British to stop all flights and threatened to shoot down all planes disobeying that order. R.A.F. Air Vice-Marshal Smart, the British commander, rejected the ultimatum and declared that the aerial exercises would be continued and that every attempt at interference would be considered as an unfriendly act. By then the British women and children were gathered at Habbaniya, having been evacuated from Baghdad on the Ambassador's orders, while the men had been instructed to assemble at the British Embassy and the American Legation.‡

At five in the morning on May 2nd British planes based on Habbaniya began to bomb the Iraqi positions and the Iraqis returned fire. War hostilities thus began, though neither side made any formal declaration. Only the Muslim clergy, inspired by Hajj Amin el-Huseini, declared a *jihad* (holy war) in a special message to the people.¹⁰³

From the end of April tension reigned in the Basra region. British troops occupied the port and power-house and Iraqi forces withdrew northward. The flood-tide period on the Tigris and Euphrates prevented an English advance to the north. The Basra-Baghdad railway line was under Iraqi control.¹⁰⁴ They shifted locomotives and riverboats to the north, destroyed railway tracks and telegraph communications.¹⁰⁵

Rashid Ali conveyed a message to the Italian envoy at Baghdad dealing with these events addressed to the Axis Powers. ¹⁰⁶ The Iraqi Government, stated the communication, counting on Axis aid and relying on their promises, had taken a decisive position on Britain's demands. In a formal request for aid Rashid Ali asked particularly for the immediate shipment of planes, for financial aid and an Axis military mission. He demanded a prompt reply and indicated that unless assistance arrived without delay he would try to gain time by adopting a conciliatory attitude to Great Britain. But he expressed

* As may be gathered from Haddad's Memoirs (p. 110), the leaders of the armed revolt differed on the encircling of Habbaniya and its occupation. This is confirmed by es-Sabbagh (op. cit., p. 255). According to some British historians, Iraq's occupation of Habbaniya would have greatly worsened the position of the British forces in Iraq.

† 'The relation of the Fahmi [Iraqi Habbaniya commander] forces to the British forces amounted to ten to one, including planes. As for artillery forces, it was one to zero' (Es-Sabbagh, op. cit., p. 255).

‡ For an eyewitness account of the siege of the British Embassy in Baghdad see Freya Stark (op. cit.). She arrived in Baghdad at the last moment before the Embassy was cut off from the city.

serious doubt if that manoeuvre would succeed, since the British seemed to want to aggravate the situation in order to occupy the country. The Jerusalem Mufti, present at the conversation with the Italian envoy, added that Axis aid to Iraq would be supported by subversive movements in Palestine and Transjordan. Rashid Ali had appealed two days previously for an Italian liaison officer to be sent to Iraq, but the Germans influenced the Italian Government to decline the request.¹⁰⁷

It seems that the Iraqi leaders were aware of Germany's reservations and reluctance. But they considered that once the Germans had been drawn into some action prestige considerations would involve them increasingly more deeply in the Iraq struggle. The development of the Balkan operations encouraged their hopes that the Germans would seriously engage in the Eastern Mediterranean and would send considerable forces to Syria.* Everything depended on Iraq's ability to hold on—the longer the resistance, the greater the chances of serious Axis assistance.

TURKISH MEDIATION

Even after the opening of hostilities Rashid Ali attempted to weaken Britain's determination by diplomatic manoeuvres, and he therefore agreed to Turkey's mediation offer.

The British Government had requested Turkey to mediate in the conflict with Iraq immediately following the coup d'état.† Owing to the lack of British material on the matter, the motive for this request is not entirely clear. It is not known, for instance, if it reflected a difference between the advocates of an understanding with the Iraqi Government and those who favoured armed intervention or if it was a manoeuvre aimed to delay the armed clash. At any rate, the Turkish Government initiated the mediation steps, but only after war hostilities had opened on May 2nd, 1941.¹⁰⁹ In this case the Turkish Government first of all looked after its own interests, which were threatened by the development in Iraq. The Turks were concerned not only with important supplies obtained via the Persian Gulf and Iraq. They feared encirclement by the Axis forces. In a statement in the Commons on May 6th¹¹⁰ Anthony Eden formally accepted the Turkish offer, but did not withdraw any of the demands upon Iraq.

^{*} Haddad (op. cit., p. 120) states, however, that Rashid Ali regarded these conceptions with caution and that this viewpoint caused a sharp controversy between the Premier and Salah ed-Din es-Sabbagh (ibid., pp. 120–1).

[†] According to von Papen's despatch (Ankara, April 11th, 1941—83/61560), the British Government was supposed to have asked for Turkish mediation four days previously.

At the time this was certainly a manoeuvre, since two days previously Churchill had telegraphed Wavell that there was no question of accepting Turkish mediation.*

Iraq's acceptance of Turkish mediation was also a manoeuvre. On May 8th, the day he arrived in Ankara, Naji Shawkat contacted German representative Hans Kroll† in von Papen's absence. He also had three extended conversations with the Turkish Foreign Minister, Saracoğlu. Because of the Mufti and the Golden Square, Shawkat either could not or did not want to relinquish the demand for the limitation of the number of British troops passing through Iraq and the prohibition to station them in the country. He told Kroll that any eventual agreement with England would only be a truce utilised to organise political and military collaboration with Germany, so as to resume the struggle against England at a signal from Berlin. Naji spoke further about establishing diplomatic relations with the Reich and promised that they would not be broken even if the Luftwaffe were to bomb British installations in Iraq. He only requested that Germany should not land any planes in Iraqi airports within the next two days, that is, during the time in which they expected to establish whether an agreement with Britain were possible. This indicates that the Iraqi Government would have welcomed a postponement of the conflict, but had no thought of changing its political orientation.

Under such circumstances, Turkish mediation was doomed to fail. Berlin's reply was not conducive to causing the Iraqis to relinquish the position they held when the negotiations started. For the Germans promised continuous aid providing that the Iraqis held the airfields. Everything depended, said the Reich representatives, on Iraq holding out with her own forces for about two weeks.¹¹¹ On May 13th von Papen, who had just returned from Berlin, assured Shawkat of assistance and advised against giving in to the British. But he favoured continuing efforts at mediation in order to gain time.§ This advice probably contributed to the victory of the ex-

* Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. III, London, 1950, p. 227; Longrigg, op. cit., p. 293: 'A Turkish offer on 4th May to mediate had been rejected offhand by the British Government.'

† Kroll's dispatch, Ankara, May 8th, 1941—83/61209. Until 1962 Kroll was West German Ambassador at Moscow. Haddad (op. cit., p. 119) writes: 'The Iraqi Government sent Naji Shawkat to Ankara about May 10th for the purpose of discussing the situation with the German Ambassador and to prevail upon the Turkish Government to mediate in case of necessity.'

‡ Kroll's dispatch, Ankara, May 10th, 1941—83/61719-20. Naji Shawkat informed Khadduri that he had contacted von Papen when he failed to reach an

understanding (M. Khadduri, op. cit., p. 229, n. 2).

§ Von Papen to Ribbentrop, Ankara, May 13th/14th, 1941—83/71650-1; Papen to Ribbentrop, May 13th/14th, 1941—DGFP, XII, pp. 812-17. But Naji

tremists Hajj Amin el-Huseini, the military clique and Yunis es-Sebawi; the Iraq Government rejected mediation by the Turks. ¹¹² Nor did the advice of the Egyptian Government to submit to Britain's demands* prove any more effective with the Rashid Ali Government.

Iraq's envoy at Ankara also had contact with the Soviet Embassy. On his Government's instructions, he tried to get Soviet support for the Arabs' national demands, making it a condition for diplomatic relations between the two countries. But the Soviet Government did not accept this condition. In May 1941 Rashid Ali withdrew the condition and his Government was recognised by the U.S.S.R. on the 12th of the month. It is interesting that both Germany and Great Britain opposed Iraq's establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.¹¹³

GROBBA'S MISSION

With the intention of assisting Iraq Berlin attempted to establish regular liaison; up till then it had relied on occasional contact, or had acted through the Italians. It was proposed either that the Iraqi Government should invest its Ankara Legation with the necessary plenipotentiary powers, or that it should send a mission to Bucharest or Ankara for the purpose of conducting negotiations with German representatives. Fritz Grobba was proposed as the German representative and Iraq requested that he should be sent to establish contact. Baghdad opposed conducting negotiations outside Iraq and regarded Ankara as especially unsuitable for that purpose, since it was impossible to evade British espionage there. When the armed conflict broke out Baghdad desperately sought direct contact with Germany through Iraqi posts in countries maintaining relations with Berlin. Hitler was also interested in having someone on the spot and German representatives in states neighbouring on Iraq emphasised the need of such representation.

On May 3rd Ribbentrop suggested to Hitler that Grobba and a

* Dispatch of the Italian envoy at Baghdad, of May 9th, 1941, cited in Bismarck's dispatch, Rome, May 9th, 1941—83/61703-4. Khadduri, too, writes (op. cit., p. 228) about the advice of the Egyptian Government and the King of Saudi Arabia that Rashid Ali should come to an understanding with Great Britain. Eden referred in the House of Commons on May 6th, 1941, to Egypt's offer to mediate between Iraq and England (Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Series 5, Vol. 371, col. 737).

Shawkat told Khadduri von Papen had pointed out to him that the Iraqi revolt was premature and that he was doubtful about German aid. Von Papen gives a similar version (*Der Wahrheit eine Gasse*—The Truth is Out—Munich, 1952, p. 539).

staff should be sent to Baghdad. Ribbentrop's proposal was that Grobba should establish a centre there which would rally the entire Arab world to revolt. He also postulated aerial support for Iraq and requested Hitler to issue the necessary orders. Ribbentrop pointed out that action in Iraq and a general Arab insurrection could be of great help to the Axis advance towards Egypt. In his own handwriting the Nazi Foreign Minister penned the following encouraging words on the draft of the letter to his Führer: 'The figures regarding the British in Iraq show again how weak England evidently still is today at the Suez Canal.' He nevertheless suggested that Grobba's mission to Baghdad should not be publicised. 114 In fact, he gave orders that it should be kept secret and commanded Grobba to use the pseudonym Franz Gehrcke* until further instructions. It was decided that German planes in Iraq and Syria should carry Iraqi markings; this was clearly done so that German weapons would not be identified until the chances of success were favourably established.115 On May 3rd Grobba requested the necessary personnel† and Woermann suggested that he should be advanced £20,000 sterling in gold. 116 Grobba left Berlin on May 7th and reached Aleppo on the 9th, travelling via Foggia and Rhodes. He landed in Mosul on the 10th and was in Baghdad the day after¹¹⁷ with two fighter craft.¹¹⁸ An air-force mission with three fighters followed him, headed by the son of the Field-Marshal, Major von Blomberg, who was, however, killed by an Iraqi bullet while landing in Baghdad. A Luftwaffe unit of twenty planes was supposed to follow in the wake of the air mission. In connection with the flights via Syria, a special mission was assigned there headed by Major Hansen of the OKW.119

Rudolf Rahn, an official at the Reich Paris Embassy, was also sent to Syria. The Arab nationalist putsch in Iraq was supposed to be aided from Syria by agreement and in co-operation with the French Government—always a strong opponent of Arab nationalism and of Pan-Arabism in particular. Negotiations on the matter had taken place previously between Vichy and the Reich Government in what marked the high point of Pétain's collaboration with the Nazis.

^{*} Woermann's notes, Berlin, May 7th, 1941—83/61690. Owing to a distortion, probably in a telephone conversation, Woermann gives Grobba's pseudonym as 'Ihrcke'.

[†] Grobba's notes, Berlin, May 3rd, 1941—792/272321-2. Grobba requested that Dr. Ulrich Granow, Erich Hornberger, W. G. Steffen (former representative of the Otto Wolf firm in Iraq) should be sent with him as well as Prof. Adam Falkenstein (Assyriologist), two radio technicians, Emde and Höntsch, and one Palestinian German from the Brandenburg regiment of OKW as his private secretary. Documents show that Granow and Steffen did go, while Hornberger and Höntsch were transferred to Rahn, the German agent in Syria.

THE PARIS PROTOCOLS

Conversations had been in progress for some time on the question of French material assistance to the 'Afrika-Korps'. At the end of April and beginning of May Berlin asked for Vichy's agreement on utilizing Syrian air bases and sending to Iraq the arms stored in the Levant countries. Since France's agreement was certain to aggravate her relations with the Anglo-Saxon Powers, certain circles in Germany and France entertained strong hopes that these conversations would lead to the strengthening of the Vichy-Axis collaboration and to a change in France's political status, from a conquered and partly occupied state to an ally. We must recall that this was a period of more 'blitz' victories for the Axis in the Balkans and of important Rommel successes in North Africa.

On May 3rd, that is on the day Hitler agreed to send planes to Iraq, Ribbentrop sent instructions to Abetz. 120 On the same day the latter informed Admiral Darlan that Hitler would give him an audience and that Germany was ready to make concessions if the Vichy Government would agree to assign to the Iraqi army the weapons stored in Syria and to use Syrian airfields for German flights to Iraq. Abetz stressed that future Franco-German collaboration would depend on France's position on the above and that Hitler was concerned with deeds not words. Darlan pointed to the difficulties entailed in pursuing such a policy and asked for real and substantial concessions in return for his Government's involving itself so deeply on Germany's side. 121 After consultations in Vichy, Darlan returned to Paris on May 5th with the agreement of Pétain and the interested Ministers to the German plans. 122 And the necessary orders were at once despatched to France's High Commissioner in Syria, General Dentz, regarding the landing of German planes.* Because of the need to maintain secrecy, Darlan proposed that German and French plenipotentiaries should fly to Syria. They were to transmit to General Dentz and the Italian Control Commission chairman, General di Giorgis, the Paris agreement to turn over French arms to Iraq, to forward other shipments to that country from Syria and to permit the landing of German planes there on the way to Iraq. The plenipotentiaries were to pass as arms merchants. Darlan promised

^{*} These orders were sent on May 6th in the naval code from Vichy (Abetz dispatch, Paris, May 6th, 1941—83/61675); Lafargue, Le Général Dentz, Paris-Syrie 1941, Paris, n.d., p. 56; G. London, L'Amiral Estéva et le Général Dentz devant la Haute Cour de Justice, Lyons, 1945, p. 205. Darlan referred in his despatch to a general discussion with Germany and underlined that the success of the conversations depended to a great extent on whether Dentz facilitated the flight of German planes stopping over in Syria. Dentz had received similar but not so far-reaching instructions from the War Minister.

Abetz to send Dentz the necessary orders, but he asked that French officials should control the issuing of arms from the stores, so that they did not fall into the hands of Syrian nationalists. As well, Darlan presented the following conditions: that the Germans should make it appear as if the planes had had to make forced landings in Syria; the landings were to be made on a newly built airfield south-east of the Euphrates, which could be closed to foreign observers; the planes were to be without distinguishing marks; the Germans were themselves to provide stocks of petrol. It is obvious that Darlan wanted to keep the affair secret from Great Britain and to conceal French responsibility for German air operations in Syria. But the Darlan-proposed aerodrome on the Euphrates proved to be beyond the range of the assigned planes, 123 as it was located 1,200 kilometres from the island of Rhodes. The Germans, therefore, made landings on other airfields too, for instance, in Damascus.

Darlan agreed to supply Iraq with reconnaissance, fighter and bomber planes and air bombs (from the war supplies left at France's disposal by the Armistice Convention) on the condition that Germany released a similar number of machines and bombs blocked in France. He also promised to remove untrustworthy officials in Syria, Tunisia, Algeria, and French West Africa.¹²⁴ Besides the recommissioning of seven torpedo-boats. France asked for political concessions. too: for instance, the reduction of the occupation costs and the easing of communications through the demarcation line. Darlan stressed that it took no little effort to push through Berlin's wishes because of the opposition of certain Vichy Ministers and pointed to the need for pacifying French public opinion. The Germans agreed to ease the communications restrictions between the occupied and unoccupied parts of France,* and promised to open talks on lowering occupation costs, depending on a number of economic factors. But the fulfilment of this promise met with difficulties.† They also consented to the French forces being better armed.

* Ritter to the Paris Embassy, Berlin, May 7th, 1941—792/272842—4; Abetz's notes on the results of the conversations between Admiral Darlan, the Finance Minister, Southillière, and the ambassador, Abetz, General Vogl and the envoy, Hemmen, Paris, May 8th, 1941—792/272818—20; Wiehl's memorandum of May 8th, 1941—DGFP, XII, no. 475, pp. 741—2. Involved was permission for the French population to carry on correspondence between the zones of France on postcards (only cards with printed text and three blank lines were allowed until then). The question was also discussed of issuing to infantry and airmen the same number of passes as to naval men and of providing passes in case of serious disease or family bereavement. The French asked for the general opening of the demarcation line for goods and monetary exchange.

† Abetz to Wiehl, Paris, August 15th, 1941—794/273220. One of the conditions which the Vichy Government accepted in lieu of the lowering of the occupation

costs was the delivery of Poland's gold stored in Africa.

On May 11th and 12th Darlan had conversations with Hitler and Ribbentrop at Berchtesgaden and Fuschl, but the discussion on the more precise range of military collaboration took place later in Paris. Contrary to the wishes of the supporters of broader collaboration, the discussions did not go beyond the plane of purely military matters. Political questions were not considered. The final Franco-German understanding is contained in the so-called Paris Protocols. The one relating to Syria and Iraq was formulated on the evening of May 23rd. The Vichy Government obligated itself to: (1) turn over to Iraq about three-quarters of the war materials stored in Syria; (2) agree to the landing of German and Italian planes, provide them with fuel and make available to the Luftwaffe a special base at Aleppo; (3) permit the use of ports, roads and railways for transports to Iraq; (4) train in Syria Iraqi soldiers equipped with French arms; (5) make available to the OKW all information on British strength and plans in the Middle East in the possession of French intelligence; (6) defend Syria and Lebanon with all available forces. In return, OKW agreed to the strengthening of French forces in Syria beyond the limits fixed by the Armistice Convention. Concretely this meant: France taking over one-quarter of the war materials stored in Syria, the transfer to the Levant of 3 heavy anti-aircraft batteries with ammunition and personnel, 24 armour-piercing guns with ammunition calibre 25, of 24 guns calibre 75 with ammunition, and the sending to Syria from North Africa of a reinforced group of fighter planes and 80 tons of aviation spare parts. It was agreed that Germany would help to transport this equipment. 125 These concessions required Italy's prior agreement, which came before the conclusion of the Franco-German negotiations. 126 As can be readily seen, besides the matter of communications across the demarcation line, the Germans primarily offered assistance to France which enabled her to fight the Reich's enemies, in return for Vichy's substantial aid.

The Paris Protocols were not limited to Franco-German collaboration in Syria and Lebanon. They consisted of four parts, of which one dealt with Middle East problems. The others were devoted to co-operation in Africa: Tunisia, where the important military base Bizerta was located, French West Africa (Dakar) and Equatorial Africa. The Iraqi events were thus the direct cause of the formulation of a broad programme of Franco-German collaboration. In the long run, however, only the part of the Paris Protocols relating to Syria and Lebanon was ever carried out.

RAHN'S MISSION

On May 6th, after the conclusion of the conversation with Darlan

(at 10 p.m.), Abetz ordered Rahn to fly as quickly as possible to Syria to organise the supply of French arms to Iraq. Rahn received plenipotentiary powers from Abetz, in the name of the Reich's Foreign Minister, and from General Vogl, in the name of the German Armistice Commission. Darlan appointed Jacques Guérard as his representative and gave him the necessary instructions for General Dentz and the French military commanders in Syria and Lebanon. Rahn was accompanied by Eitel-Friedrich Möllhausen from the Paris Embassy¹²⁷ in the capacity of secretary. Rahn flew to Syria in Ribbentrop's plane (Heinkel 111) via Berlin, Athens and Rhodes, where he met Grobba. On May 10th he arrived at Aleppo and proceeded to Beirut.* He was allocated half a million marks for his mission—half in gold and the rest in French francs.¹²⁸

The Germans had to give up the idea of sending von Hentig to Syria to head the liaison mission on the Italian Control Commission in Beirut. Hitler had already been informed of this. 129 But since the French authorities suspected that it was von Hentig who inspired the March and April unrest in Syria,† Abetz regarded him as unsuitable and proposed that he should accompany Darlan in his trip to meet Hitler. The functions of the German liaison mission were consequently taken over by the military: Major Hansen of the army and Colonel Rödiger von Manteuffel of the air force. 130 Their functions entailed contact with the Italian Control Commission. Manteuffel made decisions on the flights of German planes to Iraq, while Rahn and Möllhausen handled the supply of arms and relations with French officials. This led to friction between the military and Abwehr agents on the one hand and with Auswärtiges Amt representatives on the other.‡ The military represented the brutal law of the victor;

* Thus according to the Report on the German Mission in Syria from May 9 to July 11, 1941, Westfalen, July 30th, 1941—DGFP, Series D, vol. XIII, London 1964, no. 165, pp. 238–9, and R. Rahn, Ruheloses Leben (Restless Life), Düsseldorf, 1949, p. 154, Rahn claims that he flew into Aleppo on the night of May 11th and that the discussion with Dentz took place on the morning of May 12th. The data of the Report tally with Rahn's dispatches from Syria and Grobba's from Iraq. We therefore accept them and not the data of Ruheloses Leben, which were probably reminiscences written from memory in Camp Hohen and in Nürnberg. Dentz stated at his trial that Rahn and Guérard arrived at Aleppo on May 9th (London, op. cit., pp. 206, 215).

† Abetz dispatch to Woermann, Paris, May 9th, 1941—792/272813-4; General Doyen to Admiral Darlan—DFCAA, IV, Paris, 1957, pp. 426-7; Report...—DGFP, XIII, p. 239. The Gaullists similarly assessed Hentig's mission. (See Les Allemands en Syrie sous le gouvernment de Vichy—The Germans in Vichy Syria—London, 1942; and J. B. Glubb, The Story of the Arab Legion,

London, 1948, p. 256.)

‡ It follows from Rahn's notes that Hansen agreed with the agents of Auswärtiges Amt. Later, as a colonel, Hansen became an Abwehr leader and was shot as a participant in the plot of July 20th, 1944.

they were mistrustful of the French and inclined to support the Syrian nationalists, the enemies of France. The civilians represented the school of Abetz and the so-called 'European Idea', that is, the concept of closer co-operation with France against England, and they regarded social forces, events and personalities in Syria in that light.

Rahn applied himself to his tasks with great energy and improvising ability. He met with Dentz in Beirut on May 10th. According to instructions from Abetz—who advised that psychological resistance to collaboration with Germany should first of all be overcome —he sought to impress Dentz with the great opportunities there were in Franco-German co-operation, and he was assisted in this by Darlan's envoy, Guérard. 131 After some bargaining* the size of the first transport to Iraq was fixed: 15,500 rifles and 200 machine-guns with ammunition (6 million cartridges and 900 belts of bullets), 4 field-guns calibre 7.5 and 10,000 charges—all with the necessary auxiliary equipment and spare parts. 132 Rahn succeeded in putting together the whole transport in record time. Their haste being motivated by the need to strengthen their guards on the northern sector of the Iraqi border, the French officials got permission from Turkey within a few hours for the transit of two trains.† Accompanied by Rahn from the Iraqi border, the transport arrived at Mosul on the afternoon of May 13th. For the return trip the wagons were loaded with foodstuffs for Syria.

Rahn agreed with Dentz that the next trains loaded with arms should leave on May 26th, 28th and June 3rd and 10th. Only the first two transports sent off by Möllhausen got to Iraq.¹³³ Like the first trains, they carried foodstuffs on the return trip to Syria, which enabled the French authorities to strike a blow at the black market and to increase Government reserves.

Iraq received the following total quantity of arms by way of Syria: 15,500 rifles, 4 cannon of 75 mm. calibre, and 8 of 155 calibre, model 17; 200 machine-guns (7 of which were model 1907 with lifts); 354 machine-pistols; ammunition: about 5 million rifle and machine-gun cartridges; 657 belts with 24 bullets each; 9,999 charges of 75 mm.; 6,000 projectiles (155 mm.); 30,000 OF grenades; 6,000 case-shot;

- * Dentz tried to limit supplies to Iraq as much as possible. This is shown by the *Report*...—DGFP, XIII, p. 240, and the cited book by Lafargue (p. 65). Rahn probably had a list of the arms stored under supervision of the Italian Control Commission. But it was perhaps an inaccurate list (notes without signature, Berlin, May 6th, 1941—792/272857-8 contains the list).
- † North of Aleppo the Baghdad railway track intercepts the Syrian-Turkish border and runs on the Turkish side parallel to the border line up to the town of Kamishli. There it returns to Syrian territory and at the town of Tel-Kochek intersects the Syrian-Iraqi border. From there the railway line runs to Mosul and Baghdad.

8,850 magazines for machine-pistols and various types of fuses; carriers: 4 ammunition carts; 32 lorries; 15 telephones; 30 km. of cable and 30 reserve storage batteries. A large part of the material remained at Mosul. There were none of the much-needed tanks. According to French evidence, the equipment was of low quality. Rashid Ali complained bitterly that the arms were useless, but it cannot be ruled out that the Iraqi army, trained with English models, did not always know how to manage French weapons. This is why Iraq demanded if not Tunisian, at least French instructors.

GERMAN AID

Besides the arms, German planes played some part in the Iraqi fighting.¹³⁷ In the first flight to Syria the Luftwaffe sent a group of three reconaissance planes commanded by Major von Blomberg. His death over Baghdad from an Iraqi bullet, as mentioned above, undoubtedly made contact with Iraq more difficult, since the route and manner of Syria-Iraq communications were arranged only through von Blomberg, 138 Colonel Junck was then especially designated as 'Fliegerführer Iraq' (leader of the Luftwaffe operations in Iraq). He had visited Baghdad on May 16th and held conversations with Rashid Ali, the Chief of Staff, General Amin Zaki, the Chief of Operations, Colonel Nur ed-Din Mahmud, and Mahmud Salman, 139 the air force commander and one of the Golden Square. Colonel Junck's staff headquarters was on the island of Rhodes. Subordinate to him was the thirty-three-member staff of Colonel R. von Manteuffel, with headquarters on the Aleppo airfield. His task was to organise the flights and transport of equipment. Manteuffel's staff operated under the guise of a German liaison group at the Italian Control Commission. 'Fliegerführer Iraq' was to have at his disposal one squadron of Messerschmidt 110 and one of Heinkel 111, of twelve planes each, as well as Junkers 52 and 90 for supplies. The latter carried bombs, anti-aircraft guns, lubricants and even petrol. For the Germans were in no position to start producing aircraft fuel locally. Fewer planes actually participated in action, since those assigned to Colonel Junck were probably inferior machines. Many of them were damaged on Syrian airports.* As will be seen later, the wear and tear on fighting planes was very great in Iraq. Italy had promised several dozen planes, but her help was very limited.† The

* DFCCA, IV, pp. 430-2; Tafel's dispatch, May 14th, 1941—83/61810. Of Blomberg's three machines it seems that only one arrived at Baghdad.

[†] Gehrcke's dispatch, Baghdad, May 21st, 1941—83/61810; Ciano's Diary, op. cit., notes of May 30th, 1941. According to S. de Chair, *The Golden Carpet*, London, 1944, p. 123, one squadron of Italian fighters operated in Iraq.

landing of German planes on Syrian airfields caused many clashes. The French were anxious that they should tank up only with the absolutely essential amount of petrol and take off as soon as possible.* Clashes were due, too, to the typical arrogance of German officers.

German financial assistance to Iraq showed a tendency to rise. Rashid Ali received from Grobba—upon his arrival at Baghdad—on May 11th, £10,000 in gold (or 204,600 RM. according to the official rate), and the Mufti \$15,000 in bills or 62,500 RM. ¹⁴⁰ On May 21st, after Granow's arrival, Grobba delivered to the premier another £10,000 in gold and to Hajj Amin \$10,000. Rashid Ali asked for the quick allotment of an additional £80,000 in gold, ¹⁴¹ which already exceeded the limit of one million RM. set by Ribbentrop. And that sum—640 kilograms of gold—was shipped by plane from Berlin, but got only as far as Athens, since the Iraqi revolt had, by then, been defeated. ¹⁴² The Italian Government assigned 10 million lire to Iraq. ¹⁴³ The proposition of a credit agreement with Iraq to the amount of £1,000,000 in gold ¹⁴⁴ was approved on May 29th by the Handelspolitischer Ausschuss ¹⁴⁵ (Foreign Commerce Commission), but this, too, could no longer be put into effect.

There was no tendency for Nazi activity in the Mediterranean to decline, although an increasing number of German forces were deeply involved in Eastern Europe. On May 20th General Student's paratroopers attacked Crete. This operation involved a large part of Germany's air force and airborne strength precisely during the critical stage of the battle for Iraq. Nevertheless, Hitler ordered a military mission to Iraq led by air force General Felmy and composed of Colonel von Niedermayer, Captain Kohlhaas of the Abwehr (already in Iraq) and others. The mission was to have on it one officer, one non-commissioned officer and two privates, each from the following weapon services: armour-piercing artillery, pioneers, scouts, light and heavy anti-aircraft and aerial reconnaissance. Besides, a detachment of the OKW special-task 'Brandenburg' regiment was to be sent to Iraq. 146 The mission was to act as adviser to Iraq's army, to establish contact eventually with anti-British armed-forces outside Iraq, as well as to gather information and obtain experience in that area.† On May 23rd, 1941, Hitler issued directive number 30 on the question of aid to Iraq. The introduction said:

The Arab liberation movement in the Middle East is our natural ally

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^{*} The French had to ship petrol to Syria from Europe, for after the French capitulation the British shut off the flow of oil from Kirkuk to Tripolis.

[†] From the instructions to General Felmy transmitted in Ritter's despatches to Gehrcke, Salzburg, May 22nd, 1941—83/61324-5.

against Great Britain. In this connection, the rising in Iraq has special importance. It strengthens beyond the boundary of Iraq forces hostile to England in the Middle East, disturbs English communications and ties down English troops and shipping space at the expense of other theatres of war. I have therefore decided to advance developments in the Middle East by giving assistance to Iraq. Whether and how the English position between the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf—in connection with an offensive against the Suez Canal—shall later be definitely defeated is to be decided only after Barbarossa.¹⁴⁷

The directive placed actually only limited tasks before the German forces, postponing the final decision in the Middle East. But it did testify to the fact that Germany did not intend to cease activity in that area. On the way to Iraq, Felmy stopped at Aleppo on May 31st, but by then it was too late.¹⁴⁸ A decision was made the same day regarding extending aid to Iraq.

WAR OPERATIONS

Germany did not succeed in extending military aid and hence she had a minimum effect on the war in Iraq. Two armies confronted each other there: the Iraqi army of 60,000 (according to the figure el-Kilani gave to the Japanese envoy)* and a British army. Of Iraq's four divisions, one was stationed in the north, in the Mosul region, another south, in the Basra area, and two around Baghdad and Kirkuk.¹⁴⁹ Iraq had just one company of light tanks of Italian make (Fiat) and one company of British Crossleys, about sixty-five planes in six squadrons, of which four were of British and two of Italian production.¹⁵⁰

The military situation had remained virtually unchanged since British forces had landed in Basra. Only the possibility of reinforcements by sea—anyway minimal—was now excluded, and one Iraqi division was tied down. The Iraqis flooded the city's environs; so the British forces were at least temporarily immobilised. It should be recalled that in World War I British troops had required three years to get to Baghdad from Basra. The Commander-in-Chief of the British troops in India, to whom the Basra troops were subordinated until May 8th, 1941, ordered highly offensive operations. But when General Wavell took over he assigned them only local tasks.¹⁵¹ Actually, neither the British base at Habbaniya encircled by superior

^{*} Ettel's despatch, Tehran, May 2nd, 1941—83/61629. German data in the fall of 1940 on the strength of Iraq's army roughly correspond to this figure (Notes of Kramarz, Berlin, May 7th, 1941—83/61205-6). That figure was: 1,900 officers and 43,000 men, 130 officers and 10,000 men in the police force, 300 officers and 32,000 soldiers in the reserve.

Iraqi forces, nor the British citizens besieged in Baghdad at the British Embassy, or in asylum at the American Legation, could count on aid from Basra.

Iraq's army did not manage to make use of its opportunities at Habbaniya.* On May 2nd the British began an aerial bombardment of the Iraqi positions. On the 6th the Iraqis evacuated part of the plateau dominating the British base, discarding large amounts of arms, ammunition and equipment. According to Italian and German reports and from British and Arab evidence, the air attack created a wild panic among the Iraqi soldiers, particularly since they had no anti-aircraft protection.† On May 7th, the British garrison at Habbaniya went over to the counter-attack and drove the Iraqi army from its positions on the slopes of the hills surrounding the British base, thus ending the siege of Habbaniya. Then the planes concentrated there, aided by aircraft from Shuaiba, started the systematic bombardment of the Iraqi airfields. In the first week of the war Iraq's air force suffered serious losses, and it was completely destroyed in the second week. It is not strange, therefore, that the Iraqi leaders persistently demanded, from the very outset, aerial aid from the Axis, pointing out the suffering of the people under constant British air attacks. 152 As early as May 6th the Iraqi Government urged that German planes should be sent immediately 'to save the situation'. 153

In view of the immobility of the imperial forces at Basra, the British worked out another way of restoring their control over Iraq. The political part of their plan was to send Glubb-pasha to Iraq for the purpose of influencing Rashid Ali's enemies to undertake an active struggle against his Government. But that did not promise any rapid results. And since the uncertainty of Berlin's intentions—the most important element in the situation—dictated haste, it was decided to despatch a column of British troops from Palestine under General George Clark. This motorised force was to cover the 900

* According to the report of the Italian Baghdad envoy (May 5th, 1941—83/61185), the Iraqis had no armoured vehicles and could not force the line of electrified barbed wire surrounding the British camp at Habbaniya and the air force had to spare its bombs. H. M. Wilson (Eight Years Overseas, London, 1950, p. 105) states that the Iraqi army did not show much initiative and limited itself to the indiscriminate bombardment of the camp from the air and with field guns. Es-Sabbagh, too (op. cit., p. 255), calls attention to the incompetence of the Iraqi army.

† Grobba cabled: Iraq's army cannot be forced into action as long as the German air force does not control the skies (Despatch of Gehrcke, Baghdad, May 23rd, 1941—83/61838); Iraqi soldiers cannot stand up to the air raids (Gehrcke despatch, Baghdad, May 22rd, 1941—83/61306). Churchill writes in a similar vein (op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 229–30), and es-Sabbagh (op. cit., p. 256). It follows from Haddad's account that the air attacks also had a depressing effect on the Iraqi army commanders.

kilometres between Haifa and Habbaniya in the shortest possible time. The column had two Arab units: the Arab Legion commanded by J. B. Glubb and the Transjordan Frontier Force, which later had to be withdrawn, since the soldiers revolted at the H3 station pump of the oil pipeline. On May 10th the advance guard of the Clark forces, part of Kingstone's flying column,* crossed the Transjordan-Iraq border and the entire group followed two days later. Despite the rising waters of the Euphrates, and the flooding of considerable areas. Kingstone's column arrived at Habbaniya on May 18th, and from there proceeded to Falujia and Baghdad† over flooded terrain and destroyed bridges, overcoming or evading Iraqi centres of resistance. The column reached Baghdad on May 30th and on the following day the city surrendered without resisting, although the Iraqi army far outnumbered the British forces.‡ Iraq could have continued the struggle in the north, 155 but the el-Kilani Government lost its nerve. Musa Shabandar, the Foreign Minister, went to Tehran on May 21st. Naji Shawkat was to proceed to Ankara, and the Communications Minister, Muhammed Ali Mahmud, hurried to assume a diplomatic post at Tehran.¹⁵⁶ The French Consul reported from Baghdad on May 23rd that the atmosphere among the Iraqi ruling circles was deteriorating and that the Cabinet was making preparations to flee. According to this source, the families of Rashid Ali and Naji Shawkat were already in Turkey, while the Finance Minister, Naji Suweidi, and the Foreign Minister, Shabandar, had fled to Tehran. 157 Ettel made a similar report from Tehran on the Iraqi Government situation. 158 The Jerusalem Mufti told the Italian envoy that plenty of people in Iraq were ready to negotiate with the English. 159 By May 29th many high Iraqi officials had arrived in Tehran. Among them were: the General Director of the Customs, the Director of the State Monopoly Enterprises, and the Director of the National Bank, all with their families. 160 On the next day el-Kilani, Haji Amin el-Huseini, Sherif Sharaf, the Chief of the General Staff, and others crossed the border. 161 A larger group, composed mainly of Syrians, Palestinians and Lebanese, fled from Baghdad to Syria. 162

The brief fighting indicated that Iraq's army could not stand up

^{*} The Kingstone expedition is colourfully described by one of its participants, Somerset de Chair, in his book *The Golden Carpet* (London, 1944).

[†] Grobba cabled on May 19th from Baghdad (83/61283): 'British aircraft bombarded Falujja today for many hours; effect on garrison there—demoralising.'

[‡] General Clark assessed Britain's military situation in Iraq at the end of May as 'not entirely satisfactory', and when informed of the collapse of the Rashid Ali Government, he received the news with great relief (I.S.O. Playfair, *The Mediterranean and the Middle East*, Vol. II, London, HMSO, 1956, p. 192).

to modern weapons and badly needed German reinforcements, particularly an adequate air force. But it seems that the Germans became aware of that fact a little late. 163 German reports from Iraq attest that they completely misunderstood the military situation. Thus the Reich representatives assured Berlin that Falujia was invulnerable just a day before it fell. 164 On May 26th the Deutsche Informationstelle III reported to Weizsäcker their representatives' opinion that the situation in the capital was not critical. 165 Grobba reported on May 30th that the military situation had improved as a result of Iraqi attacks and the flooding of the terrain. 166 It appears that the Germans overestimated the attitude of the bedouins and the significance of their participation.¹⁶⁷ And the Abwehr officer, Leverkühn, stationed at Istanbul at the time, wrote later: 'Germany estimated the fighting capacity of the Iraqi army as much greater than it really was, while Rashid Ali and the Mufti overestimated the possible assistance the Germans were in a position to offer.'168

Arab accounts disclose a sharply critical attitude to the conduct of the Iraqi war. Salah ed-Din es-Sabbagh deplored the low morale of the army and the disorder and treachery of certain groups, but he also criticised the conduct of the war operations. Haddad was very critical of the Iraqi High Command; he pointed to the shortage of competent higher officers and asserted that only the presence of German planes improved for a time the morale of the fighters. 171

Actually, the German aircraft were immobilised during the last days of the fighting, partly because of the need for repairs and overhauling and partly owing to the lack of bombs. 172 Italian planes participated in very small numbers and only in the last days. 173 Fuel was scarce during the entire fighting 174 and to start production of high-octane petrol was too difficult. Iran could not be persuaded to sell Iraq petrol and lubricants, either her own or from stocks she had bought from the U.S.S.R.* Iran's Premier assured Ettel 175 that England would regard such a deal as an hostile act, and that it might result in invasion by British and Soviet troops.† As long as Turkey

^{*} Ritter's despatch to the Tehran legation (Fuschl, May 22nd, 1941—83/61823-4 and 699/260720). See also DGFP, XII, no. 541, pp. 853-4. Ritter wrote that the Germans did not want to approach the U.S.S.R. themselves on this question for political reasons and suggested that Iran should do so. The Reich Government was to bear all expenses.

[†] At that time British intelligence constantly reported that Soviet troops would cross into Iran. Somerset de Chair (op. cit., pp. 153-4) considered those reports as contradictory to the news of the impending German invasion of the U.S.S.R. German advances in the Balkans—probably also their steps in Iraq—alarmed the Soviet Government. Conversations were held on April 24th between Dekanozov, Soviet Ambassador to Berlin, and Weizsäcker on the Iraqi events (Weizsäcker's notes, Berlin, April 24th, 1941—83/61597). On May 17th the Soviet press carried

did not definitely join the Axis, maintained Matin Daftari, Iran must maintain strict neutrality towards Britain and the U.S.S.R. In his opinion, el-Kilani had acted prematurely. He was not prepared for war and Iran was not fully convinced that it would end favourably for Iraq.

It would have been easier to organise the transport of petrol, lubricants and war materials via Turkey. This problem was connected with the conclusion of a treaty between Germany and Turkey, which was finalised on the eve of the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union, on June 18th, 1941. The Germans wanted to append a secret agreement to that treaty reserving to themselves the right to the unlimited shipment of arms and other war materials through Turkish territory, 176 as well as a given number of troops. In view of the Iraq situation this was very important for Germany. The Franco-German conversations on military collaboration also necessitated the transport of German or French arms to Syria and Iraq. Towards the end of May the problem of transporting petrol and lubricants to Iraq was particularly acute.

The Turkish Government refused to agree from the outset to the transit of German personnel through Turkey. 180 Von Papen thought that Turkey was certain to agree on the transport of fuel and war materials to Iraq. 181 But it was not till June 1st that a transport of petrol got to Haidar-pasha on the Asian coast of the Bosporus; it reached Syria after a long delay. 182 Later, too, the Germans made many attempts to get Turkey's agreement on the transit of arms and fuel to Syria—but this will be discussed in another chapter.*

RASHID ALI'S DEFEAT

The last days of May marked the end of the nationalist putsch and of German intervention in Iraq. At 2 p.m. on May 29th a false report of the approach of British tanks to Baghdad caused the German military to flee from Mosul and Kirkuk to Syria. 183 On the next day Grobba left Baghdad for Mosul. 184 The Iraqi Government also wanted to move to Mosul after appointing a Committee of Public

* Sir Hugh Knatchbull-Hugessen's statement is inaccurate that Germany asked only once for the transit of troops and arms through Turkey, which she refused (H. Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, London, 1949, p. 170).

a Tass Agency statement denying Havas Agency and the UP Beirut correspondent's despatches that the Soviet Government permitted recruitment of volunteers—Soviet pilots—for the Iraqi air force. The despatches were based on radio Baghdad. (See also Schulenburg's despatch, Moscow, May 17th, 1941—699/260846).

Security which was to remain in Baghdad. In this case, too, the false information that the British had captured the Biji Bridge caused Rashid Ali to cross the Iraqi border into Iran. ¹⁸⁵ In general, false information on the strength of the British forces played a considerable role in the rapid disintegration of the revolt.*

There was feverish activity at this time in Germany's staffs and chancelleries. For a decision had been made to increase aid to Iraq. As mentioned above, gold allocated to Iraq had been forwarded to Athens, while General Felmy and Colonel Junck were in Aleppo on the way to Iraq. On May 30th new air units were sent, and as Ribbentrop informed Grobba, they were expected in Iraq on Sunday, June 1st. 186 But the landing of Axis planes at Mosul on that day proved impossible. Grobba left the city on May 31st at 2.30 p.m., 187 despite Ribbentrop's order to postpone his departure, since further aid was being prepared. 188 He fled from Mosul with the news that the English were approaching, but Mosul was not taken until June 13th.

Thus ended Germany's operations in Iraq. Many factors contributed to the failure. Paramount was the fact that the planned attack on the U.S.S.R. prevented Hitler's Reich from devoting adequate attention to the Mediterranean. German forces, particularly the Luftwaffe, were first engaged in Greece, and then—during the critical days of the fight in Iraq—had their hands full in Crete. Nevertheless, as documents testify, the Auswärtiges Amt administration exerted pressure for German involvement in Iraq. But when the Nazis did get active in that country further weaknesses appeared to bedevil the undertaking: one was the low fighting capacity of the Iraqi army-which could not hold out even for the anticipated two months, despite the opponent's smaller numbers. The second weakness was the slowness of German assistance, for even a little aid might have tipped the scales in Iraq. A contributing factor was the French and Turkish coldness to Germany's Middle East plans. It is also not ruled out that the reports of German representatives in Iraq—both civilian and military—which ignored (or were blind to) the weaknesses of Iraq's army and did not alarm the Berlin leadership, contributed, to a great extent, to the failure of Germany's whole activity. This time Hitler really 'missed the bus',† losing a favourable opportunity for victory and rich spoils in the Middle East. In view of the fact that the policy and strategy of Churchill, in London, triumphed over those of the 'man on the spot'—General Wavell—the British showed initiative and acted with determination. This was considered

^{*} Haddad (op. cit., p. 125) writes: 'All this information was false and we don't know where the commanders got it.'

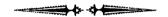
[†] Chamberlain's phrase used in a speech on the eve of the German offensive on the Western Front, May 4th, 1940.

by the official British war historian as a new experience for Germany. 189

Ribbentrop's despatch of May 31st to Grobba regarding the extended aid being gathered for Rashid Ali, indicates that the rapid collapse of the anti-British movement in Iraq was, under the circumstances, an important success for the opponents of Nazism and Fascism everywhere.

IX

GERMANY AND THE SYRIAN CAMPAIGN



HEN the Rashid Ali Government collapsed the Germans withdrew their planes and military mission and ceased all intervention in Iraq. Under these conditions attempts at resistance continued for some time in a sporadic manner. But they were at most of local importance and doomed to failure. The Nazis did not resign completely, however, either from military activity—such as went on uninterruptedly on the North African front—or from diversive political activity conducted with the aid of certain Arab circles. The military mission to Iraq was, in fact, not disbanded but remained as 'Sonderstab F'. Under the direction of General Felmy it operated in Athens and in the course of time embraced other oriental questions besides Arab affairs.

It was decided at first to leave Manteuffel's liaison group in Syria¹ despite Vichy's objections. It may be recalled that after the defeat in Iraq the Axis still had some possibility of using Syria, which was under Vichy rule, though not completely subordinate to the Axis. The Italian Control Commission continued to function there, including the German representation, which in the middle of June was joined by Major Meyer-Ricks of General Felmy's staff, who fulfilled the functions of a military attaché.

GERMANY AND VICHY AFTER THE PARIS PROTOCOLS

The possibility of Axis activity in Syria and Lebanon depended not so much on Germany's Arab policy as on Franco-German relations. But the situation did not develop favourably for the Reich after the adoption of the Paris protocols.

It will be remembered that Germany offered primarily to ease the military clauses of the Armistice Convention in return for the concessions made by Vichy. As the French correctly pointed out, these

concessions were solely in the interests of Germany, since Franco-German military collaboration could only aggravate Vichy's relations with Great Britain.² True, the protocol of the Darlan-Abetz conversation, signed in Paris, carried a reference to the need for substantial political concessions, but nothing was done in this respect during the fighting in Iraq and there was every reason to assume that Hitler and his closest collaborators were not inclined to make any essential concessions to France.

A very influential group in the Vichy Government opposed extensive military collaboration with Germany, or as they termed it, transforming collaboration into co-operation. A closed session of the Vichy Cabinet took place on June 3rd with the participation of General Weygand, who ruled Algeria and enjoyed great independence. On the following day Boisson of Dakar, one of the French Africa rulers, arrived. Darlan reported on the Paris protocols. The discussion was very heated* and Weygand threatened to resign. It was finally decided on June 6th to ask the Germans for written guarantees of political concessions. A note was then sent to the Reich Government with the following demands: (1) restoration of France's state sovereignty over the entire country with the line of demarcation constituting only the limits for the stationing of German troops on French territory; (2) a special status for Alsace-Lorraine until the conclusion of a peace treaty; (3) the gradual release of war prisoners; (4) the reduction of occupation costs; (5) a public statement renouncing German claims on the territories of Syria, and on North and West Africa; (6) the abolition of the Control Commissions in Africa or the weakening of their prerogatives.8 Hitler hinted to Darlan on May 11th that any concessions made to France must under no circumstances weaken Germany's position. The easing of communication over the demarcation line and the freeing of French war prisoners were considered to have that effect. 4 It could have been foreseen that these demands would be rejected. True, the negotiations dragged on over June and the first half of July,† with the war in Syria and

^{*} Dentz confessed at his trial in Lyons in 1945 that Darlan informed him on June 1st, 1941, that he did not anticipate any further co-operation between Vichy and Germany against England besides the steps taken in connection with the Iraqi situation (G. London, L'Amiral Estéva et le général Dentz devant la Haute Cour de Justice—Admiral Estéva and General Dentz before the High Court of Justice—Lyons, 1945, p. 211).

[†] This series of Franco-German conversations was concluded with the French note of July 14th, 1941 (text to be found in DGFP, XIII, no. 113, pp. 146-9). The conversations were renewed in October 1941. (See Ł. Hirszowicz, 'Z dziejów współpracy między Francją Vichy a hitlerowskimi Niemcami'—Record of Cooperation between Vichy France and Nazi Germany—Kwartalnik Historyczny (Historical Quarterly) 1961, no. 2).

Lebanon in the background, for British imperial and Free French troops crossed the borders of France's mandated territories on June 8th. In this situation Vichy suspended implementation of the parts of the Paris protocols relating to France's African possessions. True, the protocols were not annulled, since the agreement to aid Iraq via Syria was an accomplished fact. Nor did the Vichy Government want to give up the possibility of eventually co-operating with Germany in North and West Africa. But Germany was no longer in a position to develop further initiative in Syria owing to the impasse in Franco-German relations.

The Nazis did not find it necessary to break this impasse. Animated by chauvinist, racist conceptions, their behaviour showed their lack of confidence in Vichy and their aversion. Furthermore, the alliance with Italy, which, as is known, had far-reaching claims on France, was a very serious obstacle to a German understanding with France. Besides, the Nazis did not believe that the clash between France and England, which was the precise aim of Berlin's co-operation, would ever take place. The Hitlerites hoped that the attack on the Soviet Union would solve all their problems without any need for concessions or compromises. 6 Actually the Germans wanted to withdraw from Syria after the fall of Rashid Ali, so as not to give the British a pretext for occupying that country. Such were the general foundations of German policy in the late spring and early summer of 1941. Nevertheless the problem of Syria remained, because almost every move by the French calculated to hold Syria required German aid or consent. It was hard to foresee the results of this limited Franco-German co-operation, since latent in all fluid political or military situations is the possibility of pragmatic evolution, not always in accordance with preconceived aims.

The failure in Iraq caused Berlin to be exceptionally cautious towards any activity in Syria. Keitel ordered 'absolute restraint' as long as matters were not clarified with Vichy,8 while Ribbentrop commanded German planes in Syria to refrain from attacking British troops9 and German officers wore civilian clothes in the streets of Beirut. Early in June at least some German politicians and military figures thought that the British would refrain from using armed force and would conquer Syria by attracting the French troops there to the side of de Gaulle. This assumption was based on the fact that in 1940, after the fall of France, the majority of the Syrian garrison favoured continuing the war against Germany. Contributing to this viewpoint was the belief of the French Government10 and German intelligence11 that the Syrian troops were unreliable because of their obvious Gaullist sympathies. Important British circles shared this assessment of the Syrian situation, although many political and

military leaders disagreed. As it turned out, the latter had some justification, but, in fact, all differences in the Allied camp on the attitude of the French troops in Syria lost their significance in face of the universal fear of German control of the Levant. This was especially true immediately after the conquest of Crete, since the British were unaware of the fact that the Germans could no longer carry out large airborne operations owing to their tremendous losses in Crete. True, the British leaders expected that the Nazis would expend their forces in the U.S.S.R., but they were not entirely certain. The fear of German domination of Syria and Lebanon was heightened by the information of Van Engert, 12 the United States Consul-General at Beirut. This anxiety was the main cause of operation 'Exporter' launched by the British and Free French troops on June 8th.

THE PROBLEM OF GERMAN AID

When British and Gaullist troops crossed the Syrian border von Manteuffel's liaison group was withdrawn. This was done on the wishes of Dentz and Darlan, but Auswärtiges Amt, the military command and Hitler himself did not object.¹³ On the same day Rahn and the Abwehr representative arranged the departure of German subjects from the Levant.14 The Nazi leaders, including Hitler, did not believe that the French would hold Syria, even for a short time. 15 It was thought in Auswärtiges Amt, 16 as in military circles, 17 that Germany would not be able to provide substantial military assistance, while small-scale aid would burden France politically and bring little advantage in the fight against England. Among other things, it was feared, too, that German help would have a negative effect on the morale of the French forces. And the French were disturbed lest German action should lead to a British attack on Morocco and other French North African possessions.¹⁸ While the fighting was still going on Rahn received instructions from OKW to refrain from making proposals on the conduct of the war to French officers or officials. 19 The Germans evidently did not want to meddle in a conflict between Pétain and Britain; they wanted to emphasise that they would take no responsibility for it.

The Nazis were, of course, interested in the Vichy troops resisting as long as possible, although they did not now consider the fighting in Syria as part of their broader plans for a landing and a concentric attack on British Middle East positions. A Wilhelmstrasse spokesman stated on the eve of the invasion that it was of concern only to England and France. But his remarks also indicated that Berlin expected Vichy to defend its empire.²⁰ During the fighting the Vichy Government was under constant German pressure to provide an

energetic defence.21 The French rulers in Syria were anxious to demonstrate to the Axis how seriously they regarded the war against the British and Gaullist forces, 22 for they clearly feared that their capitulation in Syria would increase Germany's mistrust and provide the Nazis a pretext for increased repression in metropolitan France. In conversations with German representatives Vichy stressed that the army of the Levant 'is ready to sacrifice itself in a struggle against English attacks, hopeless though it may be, because by this demonstration of loyalty to Germany it can improve the position of metropolitan France and the rest of the colonial empire for the duration of the Armistice Treaty and in the peace treaty'.23 In other words, Vichy was determined to fight the British invasion of Syria and counted on being rewarded for it by the Germans. There were at the same time weighty reasons of an internal nature which induced Vichy to resist. The whole policy of the Pétain Government rested on the principle of empire defence. And the course of the fighting in Syria attested to the will to resistance of the French forces, which was probably strengthened by the Gaullists participating on Britain's side. For Vichy considered that British occupation of French territory would further strengthen the Gaullist movement, which they were particularly anxious to prevent.

At any rate, Franco-German talks were renewed with the start of the fighting in Syria. Admiral Darlan appointed Rear-Admiral Marzin, former commander of the warship *Richelieu*, as his special representative for discussions on the British invasion of the Levant. Since the Germans lacked confidence in General Doyen and Colonel Lorbeer,* France's representatives on the Armistice Commission at Wiesbaden, the talks were held in Paris. General Vogl (mentioned above), Colonel Böhme and Major Bürkner²⁴ went there for that purpose. From the time that discussions began on the Paris protocols the Germans stopped refusing permission to strengthen the French forces in Syria.²⁵

The French advanced the following demands at the Paris talks: replacement for losses in personnel and war materials sustained in the fighting;²⁶ provision of the necessary supplies for the air force in Syria; commissioning of another destroyer among those at Toulon; furnishing ammunition for French naval craft; the use of transport planes for the most necessary reinforcements of men and material. They also requested direct help: a Luftwaffe attack on Haifa in Palestine and on British warships operating off the coasts of Syria and Lebanon, or bound in that direction.²⁷ The French authorities

^{*} By decision of the Vichy Government early in July (probably the third) General Doyen resigned on July 18th as Chairman of the French delegation on the German Armistice Commission.

in Syria asked the Germans to bombard troop concentrations in Northern Palestine as well as the Alexandria naval base and ammunition stores. ²⁸ For British warships on the Levant coasts rendered considerable aid to the land forces and caused serious losses to the French troops.

The Germans readily agreed to the French demands, except when it came to their own stores or captured war materials.²⁹ They undertook to bombard the Haifa port and British ships,³⁰ and Goering later agreed to provide air cover for French ships on the way to Syria.³¹

The German air force was thus to play a certain auxiliary role in the Syrian fighting, but it preferred not to limit its activity to the sea and coastline. It seems that the Germans at first expected the French to make such a request.* When they did not, and Vichy even failed to ask for more planes,† the Germans themselves proposed that the Luftwaffe should intervene and demanded an airfield for German planes in Syria or Lebanon. This proposition was advanced not later than June 11th and was renewed a few days later.³²

It is significant that the Germans made this proposition ten days before their attack on the U.S.S.R., when Hitler was not counting on the French resisting in Syria for any length of time. It is not ruled out that the proposal was due to Italian influence. On June 9th General di Giorgis of the Italian Control Commission in Beirut projected a plan for the intervention of German and Italian planes which Rome forwarded to Berlin.³³ It may also be that the German offer reflected Goering's and Räder's views. These Nazi chiefs saw a chance for victory in the Mediterranean and were not sure of the efficacy of an attack on the Soviet Union.³⁴ Perhaps the Germans wanted to influence the French leaders to resist England energetically with their offer. German agents in Syria were of the opinion that a prolonged French resistance would make it impossible for Wavell to organise a drive against Rommel in the Western Desert. Such an operation, called 'Battleaxe', was nevertheless undertaken and collapsed in the middle of June. To launch a new action against the Axis North Africa forces in a short time was out of the question.

Of course, Vichy and its Syria representatives wanted German assistance. But they feared being compromised if it should become known that they had agreed to German intervention. Such knowledge might have a negative effect on the French soldiers and officers

^{*} General Jodl said to Ritter in a conversation on the withdrawal of German troops from Syria: 'As long as the French do not come a week later and ask us to commit our forces again' (Ritter's notes, Salzburg, June 8th, 1941—DGFP, XII, no. 606, p. 984).

^{† &#}x27;Despite expectations', pointed out von Grote in his notes (Berlin, June 11th, 1941—658/256829).

and on the chances of an understanding with Great Britain on the Levant. Vichy furthermore feared compromising itself with the United States Government which openly declared that it considered fighting the British in Syria served Hitler. 35 The Pétain Government was very much concerned with the reaction of the United States, who sent food and other indispensable goods to France and her African possessions. Darlan therefore rejected Germany's offer, which was repeated several times, and boasted of this fact to Admiral Leahy, the United States Ambassador.³⁶ On June 14th General de Geffrier again submitted to the Germans Vichy's negative reply on the matter of assigning a special airport in Syria to the Luftwaffe.³⁷ When General Doven was asked by the head of the Luftwaffe group at the German Armistice Commission if the French would at least assign some airport for German planes compelled to make forced landings in Syria, he replied (in the note of June 15th) that 'the French Government wishes that the Luftwaffe would limit its intervention to actions not involving the risk of landing in Syria because of the lack of fuel'.38 The note added that damaged planes and those meeting with accidents would be able to land and get help and that no special understanding was necessary for that. Darlan nevertheless left himself a loophole for retreat if necessary. For the Vichy statement accepting German air aid and declining to assign an airfield contained a clause to the effect that direct Luftwaffe intervention in the fighting zone would be permissible on Dentz's request.³⁹ According to the note of June 14th, the Vichy Air Secretary, General Bergeret, was to proceed to Syria in order to investigate the situation on the spot. This could be understood by the Germans to mean that the French might still change their attitude. General Dentz himself vacillated under the influence of the situation at the front. 40 Admiral Gouton was strongly inclined to co-operate with the Germans and exerted pressure on Dentz in that direction.41

Bergeret arrived in Syria on June 17th and at once stated that Vichy hoped to overcome England with its own forces.⁴² He considered it decisive to successful French resistance for the Syrian troops to get reinforcements.⁴³ Such were the instructions he had received from Pétain, who had told both him and General Huntziger that he was opposed to military co-operation with Germany at any cost.⁴⁴ But Vichy's position was not formulated so categorically in the conversations with the Germans,* particularly with Abetz, prob-

^{*} Abetz thus reported the results of his conversations with the Vichy Government: 'The French Government asks that the Luftwaffe make all preparations for such action in Syria. But for propaganda considerations the French Government desires to utilise this possibility only as a last extreme' (Abetz despatch, Paris, June 16th, 1941—658/256776-7).

ably because Darlan and his supporters did not want to prejudice the question of German military aid in the future.

When Vichy's military situation in Syria had deteriorated by the end of June, it appealed for Luftwaffe intervention, although the Vichyites were still not inclined to allow German aircraft free movement on Syrian airports. In these circumstances the Luftwaffe command refused to operate against British air forces in Syria, Palestine and Transjordan. It has not been ruled out that the French request, made this time during the concluding phase of the fighting in Syria, was of purely tactical importance. For from June 22nd, 1941, that is, from the start of fighting on the Soviet front, the French ceased to rely on German assistance. Up till that time the French authorities in Vichy and Beirut had not definitely renounced the possibility of utilising broader German air support, particularly of Stukas at the front.

As indicated, Vichy took a basically negative position on the Luftwaffe's direct participation because it was afraid of the reactions of the French troops in Syria and of the U.S.A. German intervention and the surrender of Syria to the Nazis was a principal propaganda theme of the Gaullists and the British. And Vichy feared the impact of this propaganda on the French forces which had fought stubbornly under unfavourable conditions solely because of military valour and a good command.* Vichy was perhaps even more apprehensive that the participation of German troops might cause the British to attack the French West African possessions and Morocco.⁴⁸ It was for this reason that Vichy refrained from revenging itself against the British bases in Gibraltar, Freetown and Bathurst.⁴⁹

The very negotiations which led to the Chevalier-Halifax understanding of December 1940† must have convinced the Vichy leaders that Great Britain would utilise every pretext and all possibilities to enlarge the territory held by the Gaullists. Nor can one overlook the traditional Anglo-French rivalries which had such an influence on the thinking of Pétain, Darlan, Dentz and the others.

Darlan maintained—as did later the defenders of the French

* G. Catroux (Dans la bataille de la Méditerranée—The Battle for the Mediterranean—Paris, 1949, pp. 142-3) maintains that Dentz failed to utilise a number of possibilities during the fighting. But it is at least controversial whether he could have executed all the manoeuvres mentioned by Catroux with his limited forces.

† See Prince Xavier de Bourbon, Les Accords secrets franco-anglais—The Franco-British Secret Agreements—Paris, 1949; Robert Aron, Histoire de Vichy—History of Vichy—Paris, 1954, pp. 320-3; W. L. Langer and S. E. Gleason, The Undeclared War, New York, 1953, pp. 87-90. According to that understanding the British Navy did not interfere with shipping supplies by sea to unoccupied France and the French North Africa possessions.

collaborationists—that it was fear of German action against France's African possessions which impelled close co-operation with Germany. But it is apparent from German documents that Vichy's negative attitude to direct German intervention in Syria was due to the fear of British armed retaliation against the French possessions and to Germany's unwillingness to offer suitable concessions in return for strengthened collaboration. After the fall of the Vichy régime in the Levant the same factors inclined the ruling circles of unoccupied France to adopt a cautious attitude with regard to the broadening of co-operation with the Reich.

TURKEY AND THE WAR IN SYRIA

Vichy's relation to the Nazi rulers was not limited to the matter of Luftwaffe aid or, as it is designated in French literature, to the 'question of Stukas'. It also had recourse to the Reich's diplomatic aid.

To a great extent the possibility of effective Vichy resistance in Syria depended on Turkey. Assurance that they were not threatened by any surprises from Turkey would have enabled the French to shift their troops from North Syria to the south, and thus to strengthen the forces engaged with the British and Gaullist invaders. General Dentz questioned the German authorities on Turkey's attitude several times.⁵⁰ He was uncertain as to what the Turkish Government would do in the event of complications on the borders of Palestine and Transiordan. He shared the news with Rahn that the Turkish Government was urging the British to occupy Syria and told him of his suspicion that Turkey had designs on Aleppo and the Jezira.⁵¹ At first the Germans assured Dentz that there was no basis for fearing Turkey.⁵² But on the eve of the outbreak of hostilities Auswärtiges Amt was no longer so certain of Ankara's intentions.⁵³ To day it is known that at the end of May the British had really wanted to influence Turkey to occupy airports in Northern Syria, particularly in Aleppo, but that the Turks had declined on June 2nd.⁵⁴ In conversations with the German military attaché at Ankara, the chief of Turkey's General Staff categorically rejected the idea of Turkish troops being directed to North Syria.55 But it is not known whether this reply resolved Germany's doubts of Turkish intentions. It is now clear that the Turks would have gladly occupied Northern Syria, but only by agreement of both belligerents. German queries with regard to Turkey's position in the event of a conflict in Syria—and the Turks had reason to assume that it would soon erupt—signified that Berlin did not wish Turkey to take any action; and the Turks wanted to avoid trouble with Germany, whose troops were at their borders.

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The problems of reinforcements and supplies were of tremendous importance if the Levant army was to continue the struggle with little help from Germany. This applied especially to the supply of aircraft fuel, of which 200,000 litres were consumed in the fighting daily.⁵⁶

Even before the fighting commenced General Dentz demanded petrol supplies from his Government for his aircraft, as well as antiaircraft and armour-piercing weapons.⁵⁷ And Turkey's position occupied a key role in this respect. For German petrol had been stored in Turkey since early June. In May the Turkish Government agreed to its transit and this permission was not withdrawn after the war broke out.58 Seven trainloads of anti-aircraft and armourpiercing weapons were to cross the continent of Europe to Salonika and proceed from there by sea and via Turkey to Syria. These transports began to cross the demarcation line in France on June 11th and the first unit arrived at Salonika on the 17th.⁵⁹ But there was no Turkish agreement for the transit of war materials and personnel. Ankara declined the request of the French chargé d'affaires for permission enabling the seven trains and a personnel of 750 to cross Turkey.60 French reinforcements had to be shipped by sea—after the attack on the U.S.S.R. the Germans could not provide transport planes—and they were thus exposed to British aerial and naval attacks.61

There was also a delay in the transport of the petrol stored in Turkey for which there was a formal agreement.* The French requested the Germans to intercede with the Turkish Government on the questions of both petrol and reinforcements. OKW supported the request. 62 With General Bergeret's arrival the question of reinforcements became a subject of Franco-German negotiation. On June 20th Vichy requested the German Armistice Commission to enable them to transship, by way of Salonika, six infantry battalions, one cavalry detachment and one of motorised artillery, and to intercede with Ankara for their transit through Turkish territory. They also asked to be issued with 'Somua' tanks, essential for the Levant army. The Armistice Commission considered the request justified, but was in no hurry to issue the tanks. 63 Vichy then proposed to ship four battalions to Syria by sea from Bizerta and asked

^{*} Because of the delay Rahn accused the Turks of sabotage (Report on the German Mission in Syria from May 9th to July 11th, 1941, Westfalen, July 30th, 1941—DGFP, XIII, no. 165, pp. 258–9); Rahn's despatch, June 19th, 1941—658/256765). In von Papen's opinion, the transport required a long time then (von Papen to AA, Ankara, June 12th, 1941—658/256809). Von Papen considered the sabotage accusation incorrect (von Papen to AA, Ankara, June 22nd, 1941—658/256739–40). Nevertheless, petrol did get to Syria after Rahn had taken some radical steps.

Germany's permission for French warships from Toulon to accompany them as an escort, since they expected a clash in the Mediterranean. ⁶⁴ For their part the Germans offered considerable help in shipping French forces by sea. In accordance with the protocols they undertook to escort French transports from Salonika to Castellorizzo off the Anatolian coast and the French Navy was to take over from there. ⁶⁵ As indicated above, the attempt to ship reinforcements to the Levant army by sea entailed heavy losses, but it began, anyway, only towards the end of the Syrian campaign. ⁶⁶

Vichy also requested Berlin for diplomatic aid in obtaining Ankara's permission for transport planes to overfly Turkey on the Salonika-Aleppo route, ⁶⁷ if possible without identifying themselves or reporting their positions. A similar request was made to Italy. Vichy wanted the Italians to support its efforts to obtain German transport planes in Turkey and to receive further fuel supplies there. The German Armistice Commission reacted negatively and justified their position by practical considerations. ⁶⁸ It is not ruled out, however, that the true cause of the refusal was the silent rivalry between Germany and Italy. Hitler's directives on aid to Iraq ⁶⁹ issued on May 23rd, clearly reflected the desire to make Italy a subordinate in the Middle East. On the other hand, Reich agents reported that there was anti-German propaganda in the Levant countries financed by Italy and conducted by agreement with the Italian Control Commission. ⁷⁰

Because of the death of Jules Henry, France's Ambassador to Ankara, the negotiations with Turkey devolved upon Benoist-Méchin, Secretary of State at the Vice-Presidency of the Council of Ministers, who came to Ankara via Athens and Aleppo on June 24th with Major Dufeur and the chief of his bureau, Lombard. Benoist-Méchin carried a personal letter from Pétain to Turkey's President, Ismet Inönü. The aim of his trip was to conduct general political conversations, obtain agreement on the transit of petrol and reinforcements for the Levant army, and claim the return of part of the arms sold by France to Turkey in 1939, which were still unpaid for.⁷¹ Put concretely, the French wanted Turkey to return forty tanks, which they had got from the Syrian stores of Weygand's army,* and some armour-piercing weapons.⁷² In accordance with his instructions, Benoist-Méchin worked closely with von Papen, who encouraged him to promise the Turks concessions in North Syria in

^{*} Rahn's notes, Ankara, June 26th, 1941—3864 H/E045304. Rahn came to Ankara from Aleppo in Benoist-Méchin's plane (von Papen despatch, Ankara, June 27th, 1941—3864 H/E045299-300). Rahn's notes carry a hand-written notation by Kroll on Benoist-Méchin's demand for return of the tanks: 'Numan [Menemcoğlu] regarded him as unserious because of that.'

return for the tanks and others from German deliveries.⁷³ But although Turkey did sign a treaty of friendship with Germany (on June 18th), she refused to depart from strict neutrality on that matter. None of France's requests were met except the delivery of petrol, which Turkey had agreed to long before. Benoist-Méchin left Turkey on July 2nd.⁷⁴ Von Papen assumed that if Dentz held out two more weeks, i.e. as long as his aircraft fuel lasted, German victories in the U.S.S.R. would cause a change in Turkey's position.⁷⁵ But this was a vain expectation and only small and delayed reinforcements reached Syria: one-third of a company of colonial troops, 350 men and officers from various anti-aircraft units and 10 tons of equipment.⁷⁶

GERMAN ACTIVITIES AMONG ARABS

While Germany's activity in the Syrian campaign was concentrated mainly on her relations with Vichy and diplomatic dealings with Turkey, her contacts with the Arabs were not interrupted.

Arab matters assumed a certain practical military and propaganda significance during the Syrian campaign. Before that the Germans had limited their relations with Syria's nationalist circles mainly to the attempt to stir up a rising in Palestine with the help of arms supplied from Syria. And after the fall of Rashid Ali in Iraq they had considered using the Arabs for sabotage activity at the oil pipelines and the destruction of pumping stations. During the fight with the joint English and Gaullist forces the Germans were interested in gaining the favour of the local populations and in drawing the Arabs into the war.

The Arab leaders did not conceal their antipathy to France, their distrust of England and their preference for Germany, even in conversations with the Consul-General of the United States. 77 They did not regard the war in Europe as a misfortune; they pinned their hopes on its weakening the Western Powers. Great Britain's prestige seriously declined owing to the defeats on the war fronts and her actions in Iraq. In fact, the period of the fighting in Iraq was marked by massive anti-British demonstrations. True, certain public figures in Syria, and particularly in Lebanon, held a different point of view, but they were rather isolated in Muslim circles.

But collaboration between Germany and the Syrian nationalists did not go smoothly, since the interests of France as the mandatory power ran counter to Arab aspirations. The leader of Syria's nationalists, Shukri Quwatli, whom the Mufti had designated the chief Abwehr contact in Syria, wanted to organise the supply of arms to Palestine exclusively with German aid and without any French

supervision. The nationalists hoped that in this way part of the arms would get into their hands, to be used at the proper time against the French.⁷⁸ The French in turn wanted to avoid that possibility. Since there was no question of shipping arms without French knowledge and co-operation, the Germans, in the beginning, had to give up the idea of delivering arms for Palestine.⁷⁹ After the outbreak of hostilities the Germans renewed efforts to ship arms to Palestine, with the expectation that Vichy would be more favourably inclined to that undertaking.⁸⁰ But by then arms smuggling at the front lines had become a difficult enterprise and the plan was most probably anyway doomed to failure. For it was largely wishful thinking to expect that adequate provision of arms to the Palestinian Arabs would induce them to rise when the country was full of British troops.

Berlin was more successful with sabotage of the pipelines and pumping stations,⁸¹ although the damage inflicted by armed Arab bands was not difficult to repair.

The most important German action among the Arabs in Syria was the organisation of Arab fighting units, carried out with the French authorities' consent.82 Contact was made for that purpose with the well-known guerrilla commander Fawzi el-Qawuqji, who had taken part in the Iraqi rebellion. After Rashid Ali's defeat Fawzi was afraid to flee to Syria, where a death sentence awaited him.* When he wanted to surrender with his men to the British a French officer at Rahn's request informed him of the annulment of the death sentence and established permanent contact with him.83 From then on Fawzi operated in North-Eastern Syria until he was badly wounded on June 24th. He was flown to Athens in a German plane⁸⁴ and his group then broke up. Early in July, towards the end of the campaign, Fawzi's men operating in Aleppo as a robber band were reorganised under the leadership of Aref Abd er-Razeq (the guerrilla leader's comrade in arms during the Palestine rebellion) and seven Germans from the Foreign Legion. On July 6th Rahn swore in the members of the band under the Arab flag amidst the tremendous enthusiasm of the populace. There were many volunteers for the group, which fought around Aleppo.85 Thus a German representative figured prominently in such a pro-Arab demonstration as raising fighting units under the Arab flag only in the final week of French resistance in Syria. But it is not known whether Rahn did so with Berlin's consent. According to British reports, they were harassed by Arab guerrillas along the desert communications lines.86

German representatives really wanted the Arab leaders and their

^{*} Fawzi el-Qawuqji was a captain in the Syrian auxiliary forces in the early 1920s. He deserted and joined the Druze uprising (1925–7). (See S. H. Longrigg, Syria and Lebanon Under the French Mandate, London, 1958, pp. 165–8.)

followers to co-operate with the French. But this aim could not meet with wide response. Rahn personally had had no sympathy for the Arab national movement before coming to Syria. And his views were strengthened when he saw how unwilling the Arabs were to support the French war effort. Actually, many of the Arab leaders, including the Jerusalem Mufti, considered it a good thing that the French were expelled from Syria.⁸⁷

Rahn reported bluntly to Ribbentrop that there was no national movement in Syria. He maintained that the 'racially most valuable elements', the bedouins, were deprived of national feeling, while the rest constituted a conglomeration of races and nationalities, odious to believers in the principles of national socialism. He spoke of the lack of any links between the most important centres and maintained that he did not find any elements in Syria who were ready to fight. In moments of danger, he asserted, they would all prove to be treacherous; they would run or go over to England. 'There remain', he complained, 'only a couple of groups of professional bandits, smugglers and thieves who were made use of by true rebels, such as Fawzi el-Qawuqji, himself half adventurer, half national hero.' Rahn wrote that he could co-operate only with such people. 'After long and difficult attempts I had to resign from the co-operation with the old nationalist organisations.' Rahn's chief political method with the leaders of those organisations and the bedouin sheikhs was the use of threats. He warned of dire future punishment for opposing the authorities or helping England.88

Rahn maintained in his report that his great accomplishment was that the people remained calm and orderly, that is, that they did not rise against the French authorities and troops. But this was not due to Rahn. The Arab people were simply reluctant to commit themselves in the confused situation. The Arabs hated the French, but they mistrusted the British and Gaullist promises, and feared, above all, the destruction of war.* There was the fairly widespread hope that an Axis victory would improve the situation, but this was counteracted by Britain's promise to link the Levant countries with the sterling bloc, which would at once ease the food problem and economic conditions generally.

The nationalist circles were dissatisfied with Rahn's activity. Emir Adel Arslan—one of the Levant nationalist leaders—in a letter to von Papen,⁸⁹ warned against the 'false views' entertained by the Reich representatives in Syria, under French influence. He was particularly critical of Rahn, who in this case was only guided by

^{*} Because of the fear of war damage some groups of the Arab owner classes demanded that Beirut be declared an open city and that an armistice be rapidly negotiated. These views were most clearly expressed in Lebanon.

German interests. Rahn was, of course, concerned about co-operation with the French authorities, since he regarded them as the main force of resistance to the Reich's enemies. There could be no question of setting up national governments in Syria or Lebanon, for it would be contrary to German policy and would have a catastrophic effect on the course of the Syria campaign. Even to promise independence was impossible, for directive 30—which among other things fixed the general line of German propaganda in the Arab countries—explicitly forbade attacks on French rule in Syria and Lebanon. In the light of the general German policy Rahn could only assure the Arabs of Axis sympathy with their struggle for freedom. When he mobilised volunteers to fight the British in co-operation with Vichy, Rahn reassured the Arabs that the French would be rewarded by Germany for defending Syria, but not at the expense of the Arabs. And he made sure of adding that only active fighters would have a voice in the establishment of the new order in the Arab East. 90 Rahn was in no position to make any concrete promises on the future of Syria and Lebanon.

At that time General Catroux, in the name of the Free French, proclaimed the independence of Syria and Lebanon, and the British Government guaranteed its fulfilment. Anthony Eden followed with an announcement that London backed Syria's independence aspirations, and what is more, that it had much sympathy for the trend to Arab unification. 91 True, this statement contained so many euphemisms and reservations that the Arabs did not place much confidence in it, but then they had nothing at all from the Germans. The fact remains that national governments were established in Syria and Lebanon in the autumn of 1941 and that they received real powers two years later—both under British pressure.

Most important was the fact that the Arabs expected British troops to occupy the country. It is doubtful if any German promises would have helped mobilise the Arabs to fight. Even if it were so, the effect on French morale would have been negative. Hence no such promises were made. It is safe to assume that if the German Government had felt impelled to take a public stand on Syria it would have promised Vichy the maintenance of the *status quo*, which would have clashed with Arab aspirations.

It was already clear during the negotiations of May 1941 that Germany had no intention—at least then—of questioning France's right to Syria and Lebanon. This decision arose from her basic position that the French possessions could not be a bargaining-point as long as the war lasted. Vichy put the following question during the negotiations on German aid to the Levant army: 'In the event of a French appeal for aid . . . could the German reply contain a statement

for publication that the Reich does not question France's right to Syria, in contrast to England.'92 It should be recalled that it never came to such a formal request for German armed intervention in Syria, but the Berlin consideration of the answer to that question is very instructive. The Undersecretary of State, Woermann, director of the political department of Auswärtiges Amt, declared that from the viewpoint of German policy no statement would be desirable which created the impression that the Arabs in Syria would remain under French rule for an unlimited time. But he proposed a declaration to the effect that: 'The German Reich, as well as France, recognises the right of the Syrian population to independence, but like France, it is convinced that that goal cannot be realised at this moment; Germany therefore, in contrast to England, does not call in question the French rights in Syria.'* Such a declaration would coincide with the position of France, because independence was formally the officially stated aim of class A mandates. In fact, on April 2nd, 1941, General Dentz declared in a radio address that France continued to recognise the mandate aim, but found it impossible to implement in the prevailing world situation.

The above-cited declaration was never published, but it reflects the position of Germany's rulers. As we shall see, this viewpoint remained in force after Vichy's defeat in the Levant. This view, of course, made more sense while the fighting was on, since the only force in Syria which could have resisted the British invasion was Vichy's Levant army. Furthermore, the Syrian hostilities fed Germany's hope that a general conflict would break out between France and Great Britain—a hope continuously expressed in the Nazi policy towards Vichy.⁹³

HOSTILITIES AND ARMISTICE

Under the prevailing circumstances the Syrian campaign could only end in a Vichy defeat. Before the fighting commenced General Dentz's land forces amounted to 1,250 officers, 32,000 non-commissioned officers and men in French units; 18,000 native troops were commanded by 140 French officers and 300 non-commissioned officers as well as 280 native non-commissioned officers. The land army had weak artillery support and 90-100 tanks of poor quality. It was not a well-motorised force and its mobility was very limited.† It also

^{*} Woermann's notes, Berlin, June 25th, 1941—DGFP, XIII, no. 19, pp. 22–23. The notes were not submitted directly to Ribbentrop, but delivered to Abetz for use in conversations with Ribbentrop.

[†] Rahn advised requisitioning private cars in order to motorise the army, but the proposition did not go through. (See *Report* . . ., DGFP, XIII, p. 247.)

suffered from a shortage of war materials and reserves. The air force had about fifty modern planes: one squadron each of bombers, fighters and reconnaissance.* Vichy's naval force was extremely weak and the British enjoyed undoubted superiority in that respect.† It was composed of three destroyers, three submarines, four small mine-sweepers and five planes.

The British and Gaullist forces were composed of English, Australian, Indian, French and French colonial units. They numbered fifteen battalions⁹⁴ and were probably numerically weaker than Vichy's forces; they also had few tanks. But they had greater mobility and reserves. When their advance over the southern borders of Syria and Lebanon was stopped by the Vichy forces, the British brought up troops from Iraq. These consisted of the so-called 'Habforce', motorised units which a couple of weeks previously had come up from Palestine, and General Slim's Indian division which attacked Syria from the East, occupying Palmyra and Deir ez-Zur. Britain's naval forces consisted of eight warships: cruisers and destroyers, 95 not counting smaller units. These were later strengthened to five cruisers and eight destroyers. The French were almost helpless before the bombardments of the British fleet.96 Britain's air force—which the chiefs of the Middle East staffs considered decisive in operation 'Exporter' (code name for the Levant operation) at first consisted of one squadron each of medium bombers, fighters and infantry support. These were later joined by a squadron of 'Tomahawks'.97

The French made many counter-attacks and the fighting was heavy. In the first phase (June 8th-16th) the troops attacking in three columns in the directions of Damascus, Rayaq and Beirut registered certain successes. In the next phase (June 14th-22nd) General Dentz counter-attacked and the Allied troops were halted, except for the Damascus front. Operation 'Battleaxe' against Rommel had collapsed by this time, enabling the British to strengthen considerably their

† Admiral Gouton showed Rahn a document on the strength of the French Navy in Syria (text in Rahn despatch May 29th, 1941—83/61384085).

^{*} According to Dentz's information to Rahn (Rahn's despatch, May 24th, 1941—658/256932-3). According to I. S. O. Playfair (*The Mediterranean and the Middle East*, Vol. II, London, HMSO, 1956, p. 206), Vichy's air force in Syria at first consisted of sixty fighters and thirty bombers, but it was practically doubled during the fighting with reinforcements from North Africa.

[‡] Great Britain had small reserve forces at the beginning of the Syria campaign. But this was changed after the failure of operation 'Battleaxe' in the Western Desert on June 15th–17th, 1941. The Vichy command were convinced throughout the fighting of Britain's great superiority and that undoubtedly influenced the conduct of the campaign. Official British publications give the number of units participating, but not the number of men (Playfair, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 204).

forces in Syria. And Habforce now struck from Iraq. The third phase (June 23rd–July 15th) was marked by British victories which concluded the fighting. Damascus fell on June 21st. After a few days' battle with changing fortunes, Palmyra surrendered on July 3rd. On the same day the capital of the Jezira district, Deir ez-Zur, fell and the British troops approached Beirut and Aleppo.

On June 18th Conti, chief of the political department in the French High Commission, unofficially approached the United States Consul, Van Engert, with a request to explore Britain's conditions for a cease-fire.* On the 19th the British replied, through the American State Department,98 promising the Vichy troops full war honours, but setting hard conditions for an armistice. The main points were submitted to Dentz on June 21st,99 but Conti informed Engert on the 25th that the French Government did not consider that the time had come for negotiations.¹⁰⁰ On June 26th Dentz communicated to his Government that the military situation was serious and suggested an armistice. He also despatched, as special emissaries, the chief of his Cabinet, Captain Tézé, and General Bergeret's adjutant, Captain Gaudillière, with a letter containing the draft proposals he thought should be submitted to the British in the negotiations. 101 On the 28th Dentz's messengers reported to Pétain and Darlan. Vichy's main concern was to send reinforcements to the Levant army,† and it still awaited the results of Benoist-Méchin's mission. It was therefore decided to inform the American Ambassador that Vichy was ready for a temporary cease-fire on the existing fronts which should become the line of demarcation between the two belligerents.¹⁰² A note to this effect was delivered to Admiral Leahy on June 30th. It should be noted that Dentz also suggested through his emissaries that the Vichy Government should retain sovereignty over part of the mandated territory, namely Lebanon.‡ His intention was evidently to surrender what he considered strategic territory to the British, that is, the regions bordering on Iraq, those important for the defence of Cyprus and liaison with Turkey. 108 It is hard to say to what extent

^{*} Engert to the State Secretary, Beirut, June 25th, 1941—FRUS, 1941, Vol. III, Washington, 1959, pp. 743-4. (See J. Soustelle, *Envers et contre tous*—Through Thick and Thin—Vol. I, Paris, 1947, pp. 247-8). Dentz made contrary statements at his trial (London, op. cit., p. 222).

[†] Leahy to the State Secretary, Vichy, June 27th, 1941—FRUS, op. cit., pp. 232–4. In his testimony at Dentz's trial Gaudillière stated that Pétain was inclined to conclude peace, but Darlan was opposed to it. Leahy's report does not confirm this.

[‡] It appears that prior to the invasion of Syria the French command planned to defend only Lebanon. But they changed their minds, most probably under German influence, to the conception of defending all of Syria (Halder, *Kriegstage-buch*—War Diary—Vol. II, op. cit., notation of May 29, 1941, p. 434).

the Pétain Government was motivated in its decision by the hope of saving something in the Levant. Nor is it certain to what degree Vichy acted from the fear of the Nazis' reaction to an armistice in Syria.* The British rejected Vichy's conditions on July 7th, 104 but that night Dentz received authorisation to commence negotiations. On July 11th Vichy turned down Britain's counter-proposals, especially the point relating to the recognition of Syrian and Lebanese independence. 105 Dentz was at the same time empowered to regulate all matters arising from the actual situation without entering into political problems. Finally, because of the military situation, Dentz was compelled to send a representative to Acre who succeeded in excluding the Gaullists from the negotiations and—despite Wilson and the Gaullists—in getting an assurance of conditions favourable to Vichy for the repatriation of the French from Syria.† On July 14th Wilson and General de Verdilhac signed an armistice agreement, which did not go beyond matters of a purely military nature and the transfer of the Syria and Lebanon administrations. 106

Vichy was not hindered by the Germans from concluding this agreement. But its delay in agreeing to the cease-fire negotiations must be ascribed to fear of Berlin's reaction. When asked by Vichy about its opinion on the question of an armistice, Auswärtiges Amt warned against British perfidy, but left the final decision to the French.¹⁰⁷ More light on German intentions was thrown by the directions sent to Rahn on the armistice question. He was to limit himself to giving Dentz general advice on two matters: (a) that in the event that no agreement could be reached in the negotiations 'consonant with the honour of France', it was necessary to propose unconditional surrender without undertaking any political obligations; (b) that it was necessary to avoid any concessions to the Gaullists or their recognition.¹⁰⁸ This advice corresponded to Vichy's standpoint.

The directive indicated that Germany wished to avoid the establishment of political precedents in Syria and Lebanon which could be of advantage not only to the British and Gaullists but also to the Arabs. For it must be remembered that the joint British-Gaullist declaration created such a precedent in favour of the Arabs, who effected important changes in the internal régimes of the Levant countries while the war was still on. The Germans also reacted

† This aroused de Gaulle's anger and aggravated his relations with the British Government (Charles de Gaulle, Mémoires de Guerre. L'Appel 1940-42,

1954, pp. 163–75).

^{*} See O. Abetz, Das offene Problem—The Open Problem—Cologne, 1951, pp. 197-8. Benoist-Méchin confessed at his trial (June 3rd, 1947): 'The defence of Syria was for Germany the acid test of our will to retain the rest of our empire' (J.-L. Aujol, Le Procès de Benoist-Méchin, Paris, 1948, p. 243).

negatively to Turkey's demand for the occupation of North Syria to the line Abu-Kemal—Tripolis. 109 '. . . we feel an obligation of loyalty on our part not to range ourselves against French interests in the Syrian question and it is therefore not possible for us to take a favourable stand regarding the Turkish request for occupation of North Syria', was Ribbentrop's reply. 110

The French soldiers were repatriated. Of the 37,736 officers and men, 5,668 declared themselves for the Gaullists. The Levant army lost about 1,000 killed and 5,000 were wounded. The British-Gaullist side suffered similar casualties. The Axis lost the opportunity to use Syria, but it must be said that the Germans did not try very hard to hold this position. The real reasons for this were the Russian campaign and the Nazi aversion to France. A new crisis now emerged in Franco-German relations with the fall of the Vichy régime in the Levant. Because of the war against the U.S.S.R. Germany was not in a position to aid the French in Syria even to the extent allowed by political and technical conditions. The German Armistice Commission refused to give France Somua tanks and transport planes.*

The aggression against the U.S.S.R. probably also exerted a great influence on German-Turkish relations during the Syrian campaign. The Germans waited for a decisive victory over the U.S.S.R. in order to exert pressure on Turkey to line up definitely with the Axis. Directive 30 expressed the general attitude of Germany's leaders: 'Whether and how the English position between the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf—in connection with an offensive against the Suez Canal—shall later be definitely defeated is to be decided only after Barbarossa.'

^{*} Colonel Lorbeer of the French delegation at the German Armistice Commission wrote on July 7th, 1941: '. . . the good will of the German Armistice Commission does not go far enough to release part of the material indispensable to us. It is not difficult to understand this position if one considers, among other things, what terrible battles are now raging in Russia' (DFCCA, IV, Paris, 1957, pp. 608-9).

X

SPREAD OF THE WAR AND NAZI ARAB POLICY



HE attack on the Soviet Union, planned for many months, took place, as is known, on June 22nd, 1941. In December, less than six months later, Japanese planes bombed the American base at Pearl Harbour and the war was launched in the Far East.

Hitler's invasion of the U.S.S.R. completely changed the course of World War II. The battles on the Soviet fronts in the long run determined the outcome of the North Africa campaign. The Nazi forces met powerful resistance in the U.S.S.R. and, despite initial victories, suffered a serious setback at Moscow in December 1941 and were stopped dead at the Volga in November 1942. By the autumn of 1942 the Axis troops had lost the initiative both on the Soviet and North Africa fronts. From then on they were forced steadily to retreat under Soviet, British and American pressure. The coalition of these powers finally brought the Axis disaster.

THE MILITARY AND POLITICAL SITUATION AFTER THE ATTACK ON THE U.S.S.R.

Great Britain was in an unusually difficult situation before the outbreak of the German-Soviet war. Until they were certain of the attack on the U.S.S.R. the English leaders feared a German invasion of the British Isles. They were anxious, too, about further Nazi operations from the Balkans to the south-east. The British evacuated Crete on May 27th and indications pointed to Cyprus being occupied next, and to even larger invasions of Syria and Lebanon. A great danger seemed to threaten the Suez Canal and the countries of the Middle East. But the whole situation changed when Hitler concentrated his forces in Eastern Europe.

After the capture of Crete the German air force was transferred to the north for operation 'Barbarossa'. For a few months Fliegerkorps X remained the only Luftwaffe formation in the Mediterranean. Its headquarters were moved from Sicily to Greece and it was scattered over a vast area embracing North Africa and the Aegean. Since it was off the main front—Russia—the command did not provide it with adequate resources. It thus had about 250 aircraft serviceable at any time (out of 450). It should be borne in mind, however, that the Italian air force also operated in that area, but it seems to have been weaker than the Luftwaffe. The Germans also withdrew some units from Africa and Greece and substituted some troops from Sicily for them, which eased the situation of the British Malta base. As we shall see, the reinforcement of North Africa was delayed, not stopped.

The concentration of the major part of the German air force on the Eastern fronts adversely affected the position of the Axis troops in North Africa. After January 1941, when the Luftwaffe began operations in the Mediterranean, the British had great difficulty in supplying their troops in that area and were compelled to send convoys by sea round the Cape of Good Hope and by air via Takoradi on the Atlantic coast of Africa. Because German strength in the Mediterranean had been weakened by the invasion of the U.S.S.R., the British sent three convoys to Malta: these played a decisive role in the further course of the fighting. The situation also improved for Britain's Egyptian base; it was able to obtain supplies and reinforcements more easily. At the same time, Axis convoys carrying supplies to their North Africa troops became more frequent targets for British sea and air forces. Between June and October 1941 an enormous part of the supplies sent to North Africa was sunk, making it difficult for Rommel to mount an offensive at that time. Instead, Sir Claude Auchinleck—who took over Wavell's command in the Middle East (June 30th, 1941)—went over to the offensive on November 18th. Despite pressure from Churchill and the London War Cabinet, the decision to launch the offensive was delayed, and this is probably why the British did not utilise the opportunity in the Western Desert afforded by the concentration of Germany's forces in the Soviet Union. It should be added here that in 1941 the United States and Great Britain provided minimum aid to the U.S.S.R. because their ruling circles expected a rapid German victory, that is, that the Soviet Union would be pushed far to the East and eliminated as a military factor. Thus during the six months' breathing spell Britain was able to concentrate her forces and make use of American aid on the North African front.

The fact that Britain did succeed in consolidating her military and political positions in the Middle East resulted in great measure from the basic change of direction of the German assault. Before 1941 the

Nazis' main objective was to conquer England; from then on it became the defeat of the Soviet Union. After the Iraqi nationalist revolt had been stifled and the Vichy régime liquidated in the Levant, Iran's turn came. At the end of August 1941 British troops entered Iran from the south and Soviet forces from the north. This move was aimed to eliminate the danger of a German diversion in Iran and to create facilities for the delivery of supplies to the Soviet Union from the United States and England. Great Britain's decision to occupy Iran—'inter arma silent leges', as Winston Churchill wrote later—was basically motivated by the fear of a German attack on the Middle East from the Caucasus. Besides, the United Kingdom wanted to control the entire area between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea.

The political changes which followed the German invasion of the U.S.S.R. and the formation of the anti-Fascist coalition played no small role in the development of the political situation in the Middle-East countries.

True, Arab nationalists, especially of the extreme Right, were now equipped with a new argument against Great Britain: her alliance with the 'Godless Soviets' who were being valiantly fought by the Axis. A large part of the Arab owner classes with faith in a German victory did react coldly, if not with hostility, towards the Anglo-Soviet alliance.⁴ But the Left wing circles which had previously underestimated the extent of the Rightists' ties to the Axis, now clearly supported Great Britain. This support was of no small importance for Palestine and Egypt as well as for Syria and the Lebanon. It exerted a special influence on the policies and activities of the trade unions, which developed rapidly with the growth of the working class. For many Arabs found employment in the military camps, repair shops and other services to the armed forces. It is at any rate incontestable that the Arab nationalists turned away from the Axis Powers in mass only in 1943.

Propaganda in favour of the Allies began to increase under Leftwing influence and Communist leadership. Leagues to aid the Soviet Union began to make their appearance, while the Arab trade unions and progressive clubs of the intelligentsia developed anti-Fascist and anti-Axis activity.*

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONFLICT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Such were the direct results of Hitler's attack on the U.S.S.R. But

* No scientific works have so far exhaustively discussed the role of the Left and the Communists in the struggle against Fascism in the Middle East. W. Z. Laqueur devotes some space to this in his Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East, New York, 1956, Ch. 3, 8, 11 and 14.

the really lasting effects of the concentration of the German army in Eastern Europe made themselves felt only later—in the summer and autumn of 1942. Before this, however, the situation in the Mediterranean had become very complicated and the British had to face new dangers. New failures and defeats awaited them there. Hitler's strategists could not ignore the Mediterranean as long as an African front existed which pinned down sizeable German forces. General Rommel, Commander-in-Chief of these forces, enjoyed a certain influence in Hitler's inner entourage, and the Führer showed special concern for him. Even if the Germans had wanted to freeze that front, they lacked the freedom of decision vis-à-vis their enemies, and any failure on that front was bound to react unfavourably on Italian morale as well as on the positions of Turkey and France. Moreover, the expulsion of the Axis troops from North Africa would mean that Hitler's 'Festung Europa' would be under direct threat from the south.

In deciding to invade the U.S.S.R. Hitler hoped that the Axis forces in West Europe and North Africa would be able to limit themselves to the defensive, during the battle against the Red Army.* The German command counted, too, on Italy's supplying the necessary armed forces and a considerable part of the equipment. The Italians were also expected to look after the defence of the convoys sailing to North Africa.⁵ This was one reason why Hitler restrained Mussolini from sending considerable bodies of troops to the Soviet fronts.⁶ But the Führer changed his view as the position of his troops there seriously deteriorated.⁷

Even if they had wanted to, the English could not freeze the Mediterranean front in the new situation which had arisen. This was the only front where British troops faced the enemy, apart from aerial activity over Germany. Churchill and his co-workers wanted to make use of the fact that the main German forces were tied up in the Soviet Union in order to improve to the maximum Britain's position in North Africa. Serious political considerations also dictated activisation of that front and public opinion demanded that all possibilities should be utilised to assist the Soviet Union. It would have been quite inconvenient for the Soviet Army to defeat the Germans without the participation of British troops. Whereas, if the Soviet Army were defeated, England would have lost the opportunity to attack the enemy at the most suitable time. The Government

^{*} In the letter to Mussolini of June 21st, 1941, Hitler wrote: 'An attack on Egypt before autumn is out of the question altogether' and 'so far as the air war on England is concerned we shall for a time remain on the defensive'. (Les Lettres secrètes échangées par Hitler et Mussolini, Paris, 1946, pp. 126 and 128—DGFP, XII, no. 660, pp. 1067-8.

would then be open to the accusation that it had done nothing to help the U.S.S.R. Thus motivated, the British Government kept pressing Auchinleck to mount an offensive. One was finally launched on November 18th, 1941. Operation 'Crusader' inflicted serious defeats on the Axis forces. By the beginning of January 1942 Auchinleck's forces had not only lifted the siege of Tobruk but had advanced to el-Ageila, that is, to the positions the British had lost to Rommel in the spring of 1941. One of the main causes of the defeats was the tremendous losses of the Axis North African convoys.

The Mediterranean was thus bound to play an important role in the strategy of Germany as a power challenging Great Britain and allied with Italy.

In his letter to Mussolini of November 20th, 1940, Hitler, as mentioned above, treated the hostilities in the Mediterranean and the campaign against the U.S.S.R. as two successive stages of the war. During the conference with his military commanders (on February 3rd, 1941, referred to above) Hitler pointed to the Mediterranean front as a secondary one, which interfered with the concentration of all forces in Eastern Europe. Directive 30 of May 23rd, 1941, on aid to Iraq (issued at a time when it was already clear that the attack on the U.S.S.R. had been delayed as a result of the fighting in the Balkans) treats the events in that country as a local affair. The letter to Mussolini of November 20th, 1940, suggests that Hitler wanted to paralyse the British troops in the Mediterranean before attacking the U.S.S.R., whereas he referred to the postponement of the final blow and of the occupation of the countries of the Middle East until the autumn of 1941, that is, until his deadline for finishing the war against the Soviet Union. And this idea was repeated in directive 30.

STRATEGIC PLANS FOLLOWING 'BARBAROSSA'

Thus the temporary weakening of the Nazi Middle East forces and the decision to refrain from wider activity in that area arose from the High Command's strategic conception of concentrating the forces of Germany and her satellites on the Eastern fronts. But according to these conceptions operation 'Barbarossa' was supposed to be a short one. The Russian campaign was at first expected to last three months. By the end of that period the Soviet Army was supposed to be defeated, driven across the Volga and rendered harmless—this was all to be completed by the autumn of 1941. Considerable occupation forces were to remain in the Soviet Union, but the bulk of the army was to be thrown into action against England. This time—perhaps owing to the experience of the battle for Crete—the Nazi strategy was not to concentrate on a head-on invasion of the British Isles but to

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mount an indirect attack compelling Britain to capitulate before the Americans were fully mobilised.

Plans were in preparation during the winter of 1941 to follow up the operation 'Barbarossa'. As divulged by Halder in his war diary, at the end of February Hitler ordered plans to be prepared for the invasion of Afghanistan, Persia and India, with the conquest of the Soviet Union as the precondition. He also considered following up 'Barbarossa' by taking Gibraltar, Malta and French North Africa and then moving against Egypt with two armoured corps. Furthermore, a far-reaching reorganisation of the armed forces was envisaged after 'Barbarossa'. Many specially trained armoured, motorised infantry and mountain divisions were to be formed with tropical equipment. A proposition was even worked out for assigning operational group forces to Spanish Morocco, North Africa, including Egypt, Anatolia and Afghanistan.*

Special directive 32, on the future conduct of the war, 10 was issued on the eve of the Russian campaign—June 11th, 1941. The basis of this document was the assumption that after destroying the armed forces of the Soviet Union, German and Italian armies would dominate the entire continent of Europe, closer co-operation would develop between France and Germany and it would then become possible to draw Spain, Turkey and Iran into the war on the Axis side. The elimination of any serious danger on land would enable Germany to reduce her land forces and shift the centre of gravity to the navy and air force, which were destined to play the decisive role in the battle with England. 11 For that matter, directive 21, containing the main guides to operation 'Barbarossa', also anticipated that the fleet would be the primary force against Great Britain, despite the campaign in Eastern Europe. According to directive 32 the strategic tasks of the German Army 'for the late autumn of 1941 and winter 1941/42' were: (1) to organise and exploit the newly conquered territories in the East-60 divisions; air force and the armed forces of allied and friendly powers were to be committed; (2) to continue the war against England on the Mediterranean and in the Near East; (3) to eliminate Gibraltar and close the Mediterranean from the west; (4) to resume in full the 'siege of England'† by the navy and Luftwaffe, in order to tie down the British forces in the metropolis and conclude with a landing in Britain when she was at the point of disintegration and breakdown.

Directive 32 dealt a great deal with the Middle East. The German strategists anticipated a 'concentric attack from Libya through

^{*} Halder, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 354 (notes of April 7th, 1941, of a meeting with Heusinger, who seems to have been in charge of these questions).

[†] Quotation marks in the original text.

Egypt, from Bulgaria through Turkey and possibly from Transcaucasia through Iran'. In order to carry out this plan they aimed: (a) to take Tobruk and create a base for continuing with an attack on the Suez Canal; (b) to concentrate a large force in Bulgaria, as rapidly as possible, in order to compel Turkey to submit, and to organise an attack on the Suez Canal through Turkey, Syria and Palestine (the authors of this directive based the need for such a campaign on the assumption that the British would probably concentrate military reserves in the region of the Canal); (c) in connection with the operation covered by point (b), to prepare to send a motorised expeditionary corps from the Caucasus to Iraq; (d) to utilise the Arab liberation movement. The authors of the directive complained that it was not possible to set a date in the near future for starting military operations in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. But they thought that the best results would be obtained from a simultaneous attack on 'Gibraltar, Egypt and Palestine', and that the required synchronisation of war operations depended primarily on the strength of the Luftwaffe. The operation covered by point (a), that is, the taking of Tobruk and preparation of the attack on Suez, was proposed for November. It may therefore be concluded that the whole plan was to be fulfilled a few months later.

These conceptions laid the foundation for the feverish activity of the German staffs preparing the future war plans. ¹² It may be recalled that these were not entirely new ideas. They had been voiced by Brauchitsch, Halder and Paulus in the autumn of 1940, after the collapse of 'Sea Lion'. But they were now based on an entirely new premise—a victory over the Soviet Union—not on the more thorough exploitation of the alliance with Italy for wider operations in the Mediterranean.

The July 1941 plan of the German General Staff provided for the completion of operation 'Barbarossa' in the autumn. The attack on Iran would then follow in the winter of 1941–2. Simultaneously ten divisions—five of them armoured and motorised—were to march, with Turkey's agreement, on Syria and Iraq, through Anatolia. But if Turkey should resist, despite the Nazi victory over the U.S.S.R., twenty divisions would be necessary, and the plan could be effected only by the spring of 1942.¹³

More or less similar ideas guided the elaboration of the navy's strategic war plans. The plan of August 8th, 1941, provided for the reinforcement of Axis troops in North Africa in order to conquer Tobruk, which was an obstacle to attacking Egypt. Besides, the Germans, jointly with Spain, were to take Gibraltar (operation 'Felix'); this was still to be accomplished in 1941. The Naval Command further proposed to mount through Turkey an attack on Syria

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and Palestine in the direction of Egypt, as well as an offensive against Egypt from Libya at the turn of 1941–2. For the spring of 1942 an attack was planned from the Caucasus in the direction of the Persian Gulf as well as on Iraq, Syria and Egypt. This campaign was to be carried out by a motorised expeditionary corps. The plans were based on the calculation that Turkey would join the Axis after the defeat of the Soviet Army. But in the event that Turkey failed to do so, the attack on Syria through Anatolia would have to be postponed to the spring of 1942. Hitler's strategists anticipated that they would attain their goals in eighty-five days if Turkey agreed; in 145 days if she did not. The Naval Command was of the opinion that the fulfilment of the plans would require not only the co-operation of Turkey, but also of France, since to organise transport and equip the Axis forces properly involved using the French African possessions.

The Arab countries occupied no mean place in these plans. Directive 32 anticipated that England's position in the Middle East would become exceedingly complicated should outbreaks take place there 'at an appropriate time'.* It called for the co-ordination of military, political and propaganda activity aimed at subversion in the Arab countries. 'Sonderstab F' was to be the centre of this activity.

Operational instructions were issued to Sonderstab F on June 21st, 1941, under the signature of the OKW chief, Keitel. The following tasks were outlined: (a) contacting anti-British forces in the Middle East and influencing them to take measures at the proper time in support of German war operations; (b) providing the German Army with information on the individual Middle East countries; (c) organising the supply of arms to these countries; (d) training commanders and subversive agents for anti-British movements. Experts, agents and instructors were assigned to General Felmy. It was planned to establish a special unit of battalion strength equipped with various types of weapons. Sonderstab F was to send a liaison group to Syria,† where fighting was still going on when the directive was issued. It was to maintain direct contact with Germany's military attachés in Ankara and Tehran; Grobba was to serve as Auswärtiges Amt's liaison man.‡

These plans emerged at a time when the political and military leaders of imperialist Germany had had their heads turned by their

† As mentioned above, Colonel Meyer-Ricks of Sonderstab F arrived in

Syria in the middle of June.

‡ The division of responsibility between Sonderstab F and Auswärtiges Amt was not clear and caused conflicts, mainly of a personal prestige nature.

^{*} Underlined in the original text. It may be assumed that the experience with the Iraqi uprising inclined the authors of the directive to stress the need for the synchronisation of local steps with German military operations.

victories in Poland, France and the Balkans and had lost all sense of proportion regarding their real possibilities. Few of these plans ever saw the light of day. They only attest to the Nazis' intentions towards the Arab lands and, as we shall see, their political measures depended on these plans. It is worth recalling here that the danger of an attack on the Middle East from the north became a veritable nightmare to Britain's Command during the second half of 1941 and a considerable part of 1942. 'But the question was', according to England's official historian, 'how long would Russia last? If she collapsed there would be large forces available for exploitation to the south-east, and the Middle East would become liable to attack from a new direction. For more than a year this threat was constantly in the minds of the Commanders-in-Chief. Only if this is realised can many of their decisions be properly understood. We know now that the threat never materialised, but it was not safe for them to assume that it never would.'16 And the British could have done little to oppose such an attack from the north. In 1942 they still reckoned with the possibility that a renewed German offensive on the Soviet front would be followed by an attack on Iran which they could do little to prevent. 'We are in fact relying on this attack not taking place', wrote the Commanders-in-Chief of the Middle East forces in January 1942, giving their opinion on the situation created by the emergence of a new front in the Far East.¹⁷ As is known, the expected attack did not take place, since the Soviet troops stopped the invaders despite the Axis hopes and the Allies' fears.

FAILURE OF 'BARBAROSSA' AND THE JAPANESE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOUR

Owing to the Red Army's stubborn resistance Nazi Germany was unable to realise her intentions in the U.S.S.R. and the plan to attack the countries of the Middle East from the north and east collapsed. But the failure of 'Barbarossa' had a different kind of impact on the Middle East: it brought the question of the Arab countries to the fore again, prior to the Nazi victory in Russia.

With Hitler's agreement, a memorandum¹⁸ was released on August 28th, 1941, of very limited circulation, in which for the first time it was stated that the German Army might perhaps not reach its targets in the Soviet Union that year, that is, the conquest of the Cacausian oil wells, the Volga, Archangel and Murmansk. In that case, the memorandum continued, the fighting would continue into 1942 and serious consequences would arise from this fact, particularly for the Middle East. Among other things, the authors anticipated that the U.S.S.R. and the United Kingdom would make a direct

contact in Iran (actually, Soviet and British troops crossed the Persian borders on August 25th). It was expected that Japan's intervention against Russia would be delayed, that Turkey and Spain would probably not enter the war on the side of the Axis and that France would continue her policy of watchful waiting and the endeavour to improve her own situation. On the other hand, England would strengthen her Middle Eastern position. She would especially be able to build up her forces in Egypt and utilise U.S. assistance without hindrance. If not counteracted by Germany, Great Britain would drive the Axis out of North Africa and reign supreme over the Mediterranean. The authors of the memorandum drew the following conclusions from the above analysis of the situation: Germany's chief task remained to defeat the Russians and the showdown with Great Britain should be undertaken only after eliminating the Soviet Union. But it was necessary before that to transfer submarines, mine-sweepers and torpedo boats to the Mediterranean Sea as well as to continue the 'siege of England' by every possible means. It would be good if the Germans could utilise French and Spanish bases, but that could only be done by the agreement of Pétain and Franco. It was necessary, in the authors' opinion, to tighten military and political relations with France and Spain, but not to encourage them to enter the war, since Germany did not have enough troops to come to their aid. On the other hand, Turkey's entry into the war would be of great military advantage at any time—and the earlier the better. It was considered by the authors of the memorandum that Turkey's participation would tie down large British and Soviet forces, permit the more rapid seizure of the Caucasus oil region and put the Germans in a position to attack Egypt by way of Transjordan in 1942.

At the beginning of September the German and Italian General Staffs fixed early November 1941 as the deadline for taking Tobruk. But it turned out to be impossible owing to the heavy losses sustained by the Axis Mediterranean convoys. In this situation, Flieger-korps X was ordered to occupy itself with protecting the convoys. German submarines were gradually shifted to the Mediterranean, and by the end of December they numbered twenty-one. It was also decided to transfer from the Eastern Front Fliegerkorps II and Luftflotte 2, but this had not been achieved by the autumn of that year. Kesselring was appointed *Oberbefehlshaber Süd*, Commanderin-Chief of the Southern Front. He arrived in Rome on November 28th. According to directive 38 of December 12th, 1941, his task was to attain sea and air supremacy in the area between Southern Italy and Northern Africa, and thus to secure Axis communications. Moreover, Kesselring was to co-operate with Italy's forces in North Africa

and disrupt Britain's Mediterranean communications. Hitler called special attention to the need to paralyse Britain's base at Malta.

As provided for in directive 32, the Axis North African forces received certain reinforcements in the summer and autumn of 1941: one German division especially organised for African service, one motorised Italian division and artillery units. But new tanks were not sent; the increase in their number from 180 to 250 must be ascribed to the repair of damaged machines. Kesselring's appointment was the crowning point of a series of military measures which essentially raised Germany's role in the Mediterranean and seriously limited Italy's freedom of action. Directive 38 explicitly referred to the expanding and securing of Germany's own position in the Mediterranean and to the Reich's acquiring a substantial influence on the further development of the situation in that area.

The measures on the Southern Front cited above had an adverse effect on Britain's position in North Africa. By the end of 1941 other events had transpired which had a strong impact on the situation in the Middle East.

Japan attacked Pearl Harbour, the U.S. base, on December 7th, 1941. Making use of their air and naval superiority, a result of the destruction of the American fleet and of British warships off the Indian coast (December 10th, 1941), the Japanese quickly occupied the Philippines, Malaya, Burma and the Dutch East Indies. By April 1942 the Japanese had reached the north-eastern border of British India. In this situation, the British rushed reinforcements to the Far East which were originally destined for the African front. A few units were also shifted there from the Middle East.

As Japan's progress in the Pacific increased, so did the pressure from Australia and New Zealand on the British Cabinet for the return of their military forces, which constituted a considerable part of the British armies in the Middle East. London finally had to comply.

1942

A considerable part of 1942 was marked by Axis victories on all fronts. The Germans were preparing a renewed offensive in the direction of the Suez Canal, while their military and political agencies were busy stepping up propaganda activity. What is more, the Russian campaign stimulated the expansion of these activities, not only in respect to anti-Communist propaganda, but also in connection with the Muslim populations partly inhabiting the territories occupied by the Germans. Moreover, many Soviet prisoners belonging to the Muslim faith were taken by the Germans. The Nazis established contact with the Indian nationalist leader Subhas Chandra Bose. Sonderstab

F, originally concerned with Arab affairs, expanded its sphere of interest to India. 20 There was a plan to attach Arab and Indian units —formed mainly of war prisoners—to German troops operating in the Middle East. A division of labour took place in Auswartiges Amt owing to the expansion of the number of agencies dealing with oriental problems. General direction of Eastern affairs was entrusted to Ernest Woermann, Undersecretary of State and director of the political department. The post-war German Ambassador to New Delhi, Melchers, was appointed as his main desk officer, and another official of Pol VII, Schlobies, as his assistant. The Undersecretary of State, Keppler, aided by Kapp and Dr. Trott zu Solz, in charge of Indian affairs and the Indian Legion, was to maintain contact with Bose. Dr. Fritz Grobba, assisted by von Falkenstein, was to handle Iraqi affairs, assure steady communications with Sonderstab F and with the Arab leaders, Hajj Amin el-Huseini, Rashid Ali el-Kilani and Fawzi el-Qawuqii, who had arrived in Europe. Von Hentig* was to occupy himself with Pan-Turanianism, contact with Iranian nationalists and the Egyptian ex-Khedive, Abbas Hilmi.21

Although there was a front in North Africa, Berlin made further activity in the Arab world dependent on the Soviet campaign—that is, on the southern sector of the front. In his conversation with the Mufti on November 28th, 1941, Hitler declared: '... in the course of our fights . . . we will reach the southern Caucasus . . . then will strike the hour of Arab liberation.'22 This accorded with Brauchitsch's evaluation of the military possibilities. He thought that Libya could be only a subsidiary theatre of war, since Britain's ability to concentrate reinforcements and supplies there was much greater than Germany's. He therefore asserted that the Reich's strategy must be based on attacking Egypt from two directions: the western and northern.23 One guide for the 1942 summer offensive was that the conquest of Tbilisi was to mark a turning-point in the Reich's Arab policy. For the Axis wanted to proclaim from the capital of Georgia a new Government for Iraq, as well as for Greater Syria and Iran and to call upon the Arabs to revolt.24 This was probably also to be the signal for the offensive through Turkey, Syria and Palestine.

At the end of November 1941 Hitler informed Count Ciano that he wanted Italian troops to participate in the battles of the Caucasus and beyond. And he promised the Italian Foreign Minister the territory south of the Caucasus as part of Rome's sphere of influence.†

^{*} Von Hentig later became Auswärtiges Amt representative to the German troops in the Cacausus. (See the collection 'Handakten Hilger', DZA, Potsdam, AA 60988.)

[†] Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, London, 1948, p. 464. 'Once the mountains

But the Military Command and Auswärtiges Amt administration considered that it would be impossible to conduct an offensive from the north in the direction of the Middle East without Turkey. 'After examining the military questions involved', wrote Woermann, in his Notes on Turkey and the Arab Question, 'the conclusion suggested itself that without an alliance with Turkey it will be impossible to accomplish the "Vorderer Orient" undertaking'.25 After examining the communications network leading from the Caucasus southward, a Nazi official came to the conclusion that except for the Baku-Batum line the Caucasus railways were not adaptable to very large transports, while the roads to Turkey from the Soviet side were much more developed and better kept than were the roads to Iran. But he stipulated that intensive road-building had taken place there after Soviet and British troops had crossed into Iran. He also pointed out that the march of the Soviet troops in North Iran showed that the movement of heavy machines was possible, at the proper season, even on roads which were usually unsuitable for normal traffic.26

Starting from such military premises, the Nazis, as we shall see, had to reach certain political conclusions in reference to the Arab countries. It became clear, for instance, that it was necessary to consider the demands of Turkey, as she was so vitally interested in developments at her southern borders. As is known, however, German troops never got to Tbilisi and Turkey did not become the Axis' war partner.

Japan's entry into the war created new elements in Germany's Middle East policy. The high commands of the two powers did not synchronise their war operations; but since the Germans aimed to reach the Persian Gulf from the Caucasus and the Japanese planned to strike toward India and the western part of the Indian Ocean, the possibility began to be considered of a meeting of their forces somewhere at the Persian Gulf. The Allied staffs, too, took that possibility into account. As can be seen in Raeder's report to Hitler on February 3rd, 1942, the Germans expected that the Japanese Navy in the Indian Ocean would seriously hamper British communications with India and the Middle East.

At the end of March and in April 1942 the Japanese Navy became

have been overcome,' said Hitler (according to Ciano's notes), 'and the operation in the East has began, Italian participation will necessarily have to assume larger proportions, particularly because the battle will have moved to a sector destined to form part of Italian living space.' Ciano commented: 'This is the most important statement made to me by the Führer.' But it does not seem that Hitler took that statement seriously (see below, p. 255). This promise is not recorded in Schmidt's notes of the Hitler-Ciano conversation on November 29th, 1941—DGFP, XIII, no. 522, pp. 900-3.

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active in the Bay of Bengal and attained complete sea supremacy there. Ceylon was attacked at the beginning of April. In a despatch to Roosevelt on April 15th, 1942, Churchill pointed to the tremendous effect of this event on the situation in the Middle East.

Until we are able to fight a fleet action there is no reason why the Japanese should not become the dominant factor in the Western Indian Ocean. This would result in the collapse of our whole position in the Middle East, not only because of the interruption of our convoys to the Middle East and India, but also because of the interruption to the supplies from Abadan without which we cannot maintain our position either at sea or on land in the Indian Ocean area. Supplies to Russia via the Persian Gulf will also be cut.²⁷

As far back as February the Japanese had informed their German allies of their intention to create bases in Ceylon and Madagascar.²⁸ As may be inferred, the Germans were not too enthusiastic at the prospect of a Japanese base on Madagascar,* since, according to the January 18th, 1942, agreement, the western border of the Japanese zone of war operations was to run along the 70th meridian east longitude.²⁹ Nevertheless, judging by the conversation between Oshima, the Japanese Ambassador at Berlin, and Ribbentrop on March 23rd, 1942, the Germans were ready to approve this step,³⁰ since they assumed that it would greatly facilitate their operations on the North African front. In general, the approach of Japanese forces to the Arab lands was regarded seriously in Berlin.³¹ Thus Japan's viewpoint began to play a certain role in German policy on Arab affairs, for problems began to arise regarding the eventual division of spheres of influence between the European partners of the Tripartite Pact and their Asian ally.

Significantly, this problem arose early in 1942 and ceased to exist the same year. The main points of Japan's drive to the west were the naval and aerial assault in the Bay of Bengal and the attack on the port and airfield of Colombo. Although successful, the Japanese suffered serious losses in these operations and could not afford to continue the offensive. For it must be remembered that a large part of their forces were tied down in China. The Japanese did not occupy Ceylon therefore, and the British entrenched themselves in Madagascar. The road to the Nile via the Cape of Good Hope remained open. German agents at Lourenço Marques on the Mozambique coast, who relayed to Berlin information on British ship movements,

* This is based on Hitler's reaction to the report of the Naval High Command of March 12th, 1942 (Winston Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. IV, London, 1951, p. 200). It follows, too, from Woermann's notes to Ribbentrop (Berlin, February 28th, 1942—71/51039—45) that that possibility aroused a certain disquiet in German political circles.

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had to go on reporting to their superiors that British convoys continued to sail to Egypt along the East Africa coast.³² Moreover, by the end of 1942 the rout on the Volga and the defeat in North Africa caused the Nazi régime to occupy itself with more burning problems nearer home.

From the autumn of 1941 to the autumn of 1942 the successes on the Soviet front had a great effect on German policy in Arab matters—although the basic conception of 'Barbarossa' fundamentally collapsed during that period. This was apparent even in the summer of 1942 when Rommel's victories seemed to presage the rapid conquest of Egypt.

FROM TEHRAN TO BERLIN

Direct preparations for the Eastern campaign and the launching of aggression against the U.S.S.R. coincided with the weakening of German activity in the Arab world. After the unsuccessful *putsch* in Iraq and the occupation of Syria and Lebanon by British and Gaullist forces, it became more difficult to keep in touch with Arab nationalists.

Even during the Syrian fighting the Nazis felt the lack there of such determined and ruthless leaders as the Mufti. But, despite the unfavourable development of the situation in the Arab East in 1941, the Germans tried to maintain contact with the nationalist leaders. Weizsäcker issued special orders on June 1st to the effect that it was not permissible to create the impression that the Germans shunned their friends in time of defeat.³³ He was expressly motivated by the fear that the further development of German policy would otherwise be endangered. Auswärtiges Amt checked on the possibility of political action being open to the chiefs of the Iraqi rebellion and was ready to subsidise the Arab leaders who fled to Iran. On August 13th the Undersecretary of State, Woermann, ordered Melchers to invite the Jerusalem Mufti and other Arabs prominent in the Palestine revolt to Berlin.34 Berlin actively helped the Palestinians who lived in Syria to move to Turkey, 35 from where they hoped to get to territory under Axis domination.

It proved difficult, however, to bring Hajj Amin el-Huseini and Rashid Ali el-Kilani to Europe. They were both in the capital of Iran, where their situation had become precarious after Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union. They had been prevented, even before that, from carrying on any political activity because of British pressure on the Government of Iran. After the invasion of the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and the Soviet Union kept raising the question of German activity in Persia. The Shah and his Government

did not relish laying themselves open to the accusation that they permitted enemies of Great Britain to operate in Iran. And it seems that German and Italian diplomatic posts competed in attempts to attract the two Arab leaders to their respective countries.³⁶

The position of the two Axis adherents became uncertain under pressure from the Allied Powers and they had to consider how to leave Iran quickly. The Berlin authorities thought that the only way was via Turkey,37 as was in fact the case. However, the Turks were reluctant to grant visas to the troublesome pair whose Pan-Arabic views did not meet with Ankara's sympathy. The Germans intervened with a demand for visas. How energetic the demand was is not known, but it is quite possible that the Nazis, drunk with expectation of a rapid victory in the Soviet Union, failed to realise the danger threatening their supporters in Iran.* It may be assumed that the British informed the Turkish Government of their objections to the Mufti and el-Kilani leaving Iran. The London Government aimed to prevent the freedom of movement of these Arab leaders and to stop them from getting to Europe.† It may be surmised, too, that the British made stronger attempts to intervene with the Turkish Government in the case of the Mufti than of the ex-Premier of Iraq.³⁸

El-Kilani received a Turkish visa in mid-July and left Tehran on the 20th, crossing the Iranian border with a group of co-workers on the 22nd.39 But the Turks failed to give him a transit visa40 and later refused to allow him to leave the country and proceed to Berlin.41 However, as el-Kilani himself maintained, he was promised confidentially that he would not be prevented from leaving the country secretly.42 Under the circumstances, the Abwehr took steps to get him out of Turkey. The necessary decisions were taken on November 17th at a conference in Ankara of von Papen, Moyzisch and envoy Schmidt.⁴³ El-Kilani flew from Istanbul in a German plane on November 21st.⁴⁴ Leverkühn, one of the organisers of this flight, relates that Rashid Ali left Turkey as a supposed member of a German press delegation, which on Turkey's invitation came to Istanbul on Ribbentrop's plane. German officials informed the Turks that the delegation would be composed of eight persons, but only seven arrived. When the delegation departed el-Kilani, covered with bandages, passed off as the eighth member, who because of illness could not participate in receptions and trips provided by the delega-

^{*} U. K. Haddad, Harakat Rashid Ali el-Kilani 1941 Sana—The Rashid Ali el-Kilani Movement of 1941—op. cit., pp. 134–6. The same impression is given by the despatches of Ettel from Tehran in that period: from the end of June to the end of August, 1941 (collection 'Büro RAM Iran' and 'StS Iran'—65/45214–46101).

[†] From the first months of the war the British Government made attempts to get the leaders of the Palestine uprising to return to the country.

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tion's programme.* His arrival in Germany was kept secret and he remained in seclusion for a few days.⁴⁵ Later it was announced that he had managed to escape from Turkey via the Black Sea to Bulgaria⁴⁶ by his own efforts.

It proved more difficult with the Mufti because of the greater interest in his whereabouts. If one is to believe information deriving from the Mufti's own environment, not only the Germans but the Italians—who had been subsidising him for a long time—and even the British† were interested in attracting him. The British planned to occupy the country; and certainly did not want the Mufti and his confederates to leave Iran. At any rate, the Mufti did not get a Turkish visa. As stated above, British and Soviet troops crossed into Iran on August 25th and entered the capital on September 17th. They did not catch the Mufti of Jerusalem. Several other Palestinian Arab leaders who escaped with him from Iraq (his cousin Jemal el-Huseini and Amin et-Tamimi among them) were arrested by the British and interned in Southern Rhodesia. Osman Kemal Haddad, the Mufti's private secretary, and the Iraqi officers who led the uprising were also seized. Extradited to Iraq, the officers were soon executed.⁴⁷ Only Salah ed-Din es-Sabbagh reached Turkey in April 194248 but he perished on the gallows in Baghdad after being turned over by the British, in October 1945.49

* P. Leverkühn (Der geheime Nachrichtendienst der deutschen Wehrmacht im Kriege—The Intelligence Service of the German Army during the War—Frankfurt a/M, 1957, pp. 167-8) maintains that Kilani used a passport as Wackernagel during his flight. It seems from AA documents that he carried identification

papers in the name of Herr Worthmann.

† Ettel's despatch on a conversation with Haddad, Tehran, August 15th, 1941-71/50885. Haddad informed Ettel that Nuri Said, then Iraqi Ambassador to Cairo, had written to Hajj Amin el-Huseini through the intermediation of Muhammed Ali-King Farouk's uncle-with a proposition for an understanding with England. Nuri Said allegedly wrote that England, of course, could do nothing new on the question of Palestine because of the American Jews, but that this would cease to be a consideration after the war. In view of Britain's political methods in her Empire in general and in the Arab lands in particular, this information cannot be rejected out of hand, although the highly strained relations between the Mufti and the British Government would tend to make it unlikely. Besides, Hajj Amin was interested in presenting himself as a person who was courted by all. The fact, however, that Haddad did not refer to a proposition for the Mufti to return to Palestine would attest to the veracity of his information. For such an offer could not be expected from the English at that time. The alleged British proposal would thus have amounted to an offer of immunity in return for his agreement to settle wherever the British indicated during the war and to some vague reference to the future.

‡ The Egyptian Ambassador at Tehran showed Ettel information sent out by King Farouk to the effect that the British had decided to occupy Iran before they received the news of the great German victories in the Soviet Union (Ettel's despatch, Tehran, July 3rd, 1941—DGFP, XIII, no. 66, pp. 77-78).

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Hajj Amin el-Huseini first took asylum at the Japanese Legation* and his contact with German agents was broken off.⁵⁰ He later escaped to Turkey in disguise and fled from there to Italy, where he arrived in the middle of October. His flight was organised by Italian intelligence.† On October 27th the Mufti was received by Mussolini.⁵¹

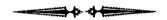
Thus the most important pro-Axis Arab leaders were in Europe by November 1941. As indicated, it was clear at that time that the war would not end that year on the Soviet fronts and that therefore certain measures on the North African front were needed. As shown above, the military command decided to activise that front—though in a limited way—and to step up German participation in the battle for the Mediterranean. The wider plans for military operations from the north were not dropped either. Arab affairs again assumed greater significance for the Axis, which by the end of 1941 had to consider new policy directives for the Arab East.

* Haddad, op. cit., p. 141; Ettel's despatch, Tehran, September 6th, 1941—794/273218. On that same day the Allies demanded that Iran should close the German, Italian, Hungarian, and Rumanian legations and expel the diplomatic representatives of these countries.

† Bismarck to AA, Rome, October 13th, 1941—DGFP, Series D, Vol. XIII, London, 1964, no. 399, pp. 641–2; Grobba's notes, Berlin, November 6th, 1941—ibid, no. 452, pp. 746–9. Leverkühn says (op. cit., p. 167) that the Mufti, dressed as the servant of the Italian envoy, left Iran with him. With the help of Italian diplomatic agents he proceeded to Rome.

XI

NEW DECLARATIONS ON ARAB QUESTIONS



SUMMER OF 1941

Arab national demands again came to the fore. At that time German documents dealt with this question alongside the matter of a statement on 'Free India'. It seems probable that a declaration was sought by Arabs living in Europe and co-operating with the German and Italian propaganda machines. It is known, for instance, that Fawzi el-Qawuqji tried to obtain such a declaration and to arrange that German propaganda in the Arab countries should be angled accordingly. It will be recalled that Fawzi was seriously wounded in Syria and taken to Germany at the end of June. A declaration favouring a 'Free India' was sought at the time by Subhas Chandra Bose, one of the leaders of the radical wing of the Indian National Congress.*

These efforts were not without effect on German officials and politicians, but there were also objective factors for the renewed German interest in a declaration. While the fighting was on in Iraq and Syria the question had been overshadowed by more concrete problems: supply of arms, financial assistance, communications with the Arab countries. The difficulties involved in issuing a public declaration supporting Arab demands were probably greater during periods of heightened activity in the Arab countries. Owing mainly to considerations of prestige, Germany did not want openly and

* Bose arrived in Germany on April 2nd, 1941. His original plan was to set up an Indian Government in Germany modelled on the London Governments-in-exile. The Germans had strong objections, however. They were reluctant to announce India's liberation as one of their war aims; nor did they want to recognise Bose and his 'Forward Bloc' as the exponents of India. Then followed the question of a declaration on a free India. This will be dealt with more fully later. (See DGFP, XII, nos. 257, 300, 323, 425, and 553.)

demonstratively to engage in undertakings where the outcome was uncertain. The policy of non-recognition of Arab aspirations was dictated by the need to obtain the assistance and co-operation of Italy and France. But after the defeat in Iraq and Syria the Germans could not do much more than carry on propaganda, since the Middle East had become a closed zone of British domination. In these circumstances the question of a declaration again assumed great significance.

It may be assumed that the effectiveness of German propaganda suffered from the lack of a more far-reaching declaration than the one of October 23rd, 1940. For the Axis states were confronted with the widespread British political activity in the Arab East during the spring and summer of 1941. Many people in the British Cairo circles recognised the need for concessions to the Arabs, especially on the Palestine question. They almost considered such concessions to be necessary to save the British Empire.2 With this in view, British propaganda proclaimed that certain principles of the White Paper of May 17th, 1939, had already been carried out in Palestine and that Iraq had retained her sovereignty despite Britain's victory over the rebels. But the broadest use was made of the fact that Great Britain guaranteed the implementation of the declaration of Syrian and Lebanese independence made by the Free French on June 8th, 1941. Britain also pointed to certain other concessions to the nationalists of these countries and referred to Anthony Eden's statement of May 29th, 1941, expressing his sympathy for the Arabs' unification aspirations.

In fact, the Arabs did not place very much confidence in English promises, particularly those made during the war, when the situation of Britain and her empire left much to be desired. Besides, the English war in Iraq and the British-Soviet measures in Iran were bound to arouse the nationalists' dissatisfaction.

The Germans decided that the intensified British propaganda had to be answered by a more precise declaration than the previous one. This is indicated by some statements of Auswärtiges Amt officials handling Arab questions.³ The proposals submitted by Weizsäcker to Ribbentrop in relation to the entry of British and Soviet troops into Iran⁴ are of interest in this respect. To meet this move Weizsäcker proposed strong propaganda measures, the stopping of arms shipments, and preparations to receive the Germans evacuated from Iran in Turkey. But the only point for which he argued strongly was for a German declaration on India and the Arab countries. Weizsäcker thought that the Iranian events might constitute the best occasion for issuing such a declaration.

Some Nazi officials were of the opinion that, after the abolition

of the Vichy régime in Syria and Lebanon, Germany would have greater freedom of action in the Arab countries, especially in the field of propaganda. What is more, it will be recalled that the elimination of Vichy rule in the Levant corresponded with, or even to some extent contributed to, the crisis in Franco-German relations.

In the sphere of Franco-German relations, the summer of 1941 was marked by Berlin's wish that the Vichy Government should carry out the provisions of the Paris protocols relating to Tunisia. Germany and Italy were concerned with utilising Tunisian ports to equip their troops in North Africa. Vichy did not fully consent, which created tension and led to a break in diplomatic relations. It also had a certain repercussion on the Reich's Arab policy. It was precisely at this time (July 20th, 1941) that Ribbentrop issued a directive to all Auswärtiges Amt agencies occupied with Arab propaganda. 'Considerations for France's rule over Syria', declared Ribbentrop, 'imposed on us a certain restraint in supporting the demands of the Arabs. . . . With the collapse of French resistance against England in Syria the reason for this reserve has been eliminated. I ask you therefore to support vigorously henceforth the wishes of the Arabs for the achievement of unlimited freedom in the propaganda treatment of the Arab question. This propaganda must be carried on under the slogan "The Axis Fights for the Freedom of the Arabs"." The directive further stipulated that the German Government should attempt to secure Italian co-operation in this sphere.5

This standpoint, however, had to be changed shortly afterwards and no declaration on Arab demands was, in fact, produced. For the question of a new and far-reaching declaration had to be discussed with the Italian Government and it was an open secret that Rome often expressed opposition to Arab unity, was averse even to a loose federation and would not agree to use these slogans in propaganda. After Eden's speech of May 29th it was felt that an Axis declaration ignoring the demand for unification might have done more harm than good. This is why Ribbentrop did not agree with Weizsäcker's proposition to issue a declaration on free India and Arab independence.* In November 1941, when Hajj Amin el-Huseini and Rashid Ali el-Kilani were in Berlin, this matter was still kept in abeyance.

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^{*} On the margin of Weizsäcker's notes for the office of the Reich Foreign Minister (Berlin, August 25th, 1941, DGFP, XIII, no. 449, pp. 742-3) there is a comment 'yes' at point 4 (stopping the arms supply to Iran) and point 7 (propaganda use of Anglo-Soviet policy toward Iran), but there is no comment on point 6 (a declaration on the questions of Indian and Arab independence). See also Woermann's notes, Berlin, August 25th, 1941—65/45845.

THE MUFTI'S ARRIVAL AND THE ITALIAN DRAFT DECLARATION

On November 6th, 1941, the Mufti travelled from Rome to Berlin. In Italy he had held conversations with Mussolini and Ciano which had resulted in an agreement to issue a declaration on Arab demands. The Italians had prepared a draft⁷ which made provision for the Axis Powers offering 'every possible support' to the Arab countries occupied or controlled by England 'in the fight for their freedom', and expressed readiness to recognise the 'full sovereignty and complete independence of the Arab countries of the Near East which are now occupied or controlled by the English'. It also supported the elimination of the Jewish national home in Palestine. The Axis Powers were to conclude a pact of friendship and future co-operation with the Arab leaders; this was to be negotiated as soon as possible. Included, too, was a promise to respect the sovereignty and independence of the Arab countries which already enjoyed that status.

The Italian text suffered from some basic limitations. First of all. Italy distinguished the 'Arab countries of the Near East' from other Arab countries. Rome understood the concept 'Arab countries of the Near East' as covering Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Transjordan, whose independence they were ready to recognise. They made clear that this concept did not apply to Egypt and the Sudan. It was not accidental that the Italians did not enumerate the countries—despite the propositions of the Arab leaders—to which their promise applied. They left especially unclear their plans and intentions towards the countries of the Arab Peninsula. As for the countries not belonging to 'the Arab countries of the Near East' the Italians supported their 'liberation' from England but not their independence.* The Italian draft referred to all possible aid to the Arab countries without limitations—whether occupied or controlled by England—but the words 'full sovereignty and complete independence' were used only in relation to the 'Arab countries of the Near East'. The promise to respect the sovereignty and independence (without the adjectives 'complete' and 'full') of the Arab countries which had already attained that status applied to Egypt. It was hence solely a question in this case of respecting that scope of sovereignty which Egypt already enjoyed. The Italians wanted the same privileges in Egypt as enjoyed by Great Britain and this meant getting the same treaty rights as Great Britain had.

The Mufti expressed some reservations and demanded a change

^{*} The Italians thus established their viewpoint during the negotiations with Germany. (See Mackensen's despatch, Rome, November 14th, 1941—71/50936-9.)

in some formulations: aid should be extended to Arab countries not only 'in the struggle for their freedom', but in the 'fight for their freedom and complete independence'. And the Axis Powers should recognise the 'full sovereignty and complete independence of the already sovereign and independent Arab countries'.

The Mufti made another, no less important, charge against the Italian draft: its omission of the question of Arab unification. Unity, in the words of the Mufti, was the main point of the Arab programme. But the Italians were not ready to make any promises here. Ciano at first clearly refused to support Pan-Arabism, but he later agreed to the following formulation: 'the right of the Arab peoples of the Near East to attain unity in accordance with their desires', which was, of course, ambiguous. In this case, too, the Italian concessions (at least in words) related to the 'Arab countries of the Near East', i.e. only to the Fertile Crescent. Hajj Amin finally had to accept the above limitations. True, the Italians explained their reluctance to support the idea of Arab unity by the fact that there were differences among the Arabs themselves; but the unavoidable impression is that they did not want to tie their hands in view of their interests in and intentions towards certain Arab lands.

For Germany, relations with Italy were, of course, more important than the national demands of the Arabs. Hence on the question of the declaration Berlin agreed with the wishes expressed by the Palazzo Chigi. Italy did not want the Arab leaders, particularly the Mufti, to get the impression that Germany was more favourably inclined than she was to accept the Arab demands.* Hence Weizsäcker did not support the Arab reservations to the Italian draft during his conversations with the Mufti.† There are many indications that the German officials did not agree with the view of their Italian colleagues that the Axis declaration should not contain any promise of support for the Arab unity aspirations. A statement on the Arab question, wrote Woermann, ought to contain a promise on the independence of the Arab countries as on their federal union, but he was of the opinion that the promises should be general and that the statement should contain no details on the new order 'in the Arab space'. 11 These matters should be kept in abeyance, he thought, until there were German troops in the Middle East. Only then would it be necessary to clarify with Italy the future Arab policy.

^{*} Mackensen's despatch, Rome, November 14th, 1941—71/50936-9. Such a request was made by Buti in a conversation with von Bismarck.

[†] Weizsäcker's notes, Berlin, November 7th, 1941—71/50908. The conversation with the Mufti was cold in tone. Contrary to Grobba's promises on the previous day, Weizsäcker passed off in silence Hajj Amin's request for an audience with Ribbentrop.

Their position on the question of the declaration shows that the German officials did not want such a clarification at the time. German-Italian relations were based on the principle that Rome's influence would be supreme in the Mediterranean, at least in its south-eastern part. The necessary conditions for a new, more detailed discussion of Arab affairs with Italy in the Nazis' view was the presence of German troops 'in the Arab countries of the Near East'. But Woermann also reckoned on Italian troops participating in the conquest of these lands, and he suggested that Germany would in that case benefit from Italy's unpopularity. Woermann also took into account the possibility of an Italian refusal to evacuate occupied lands. This was not the time, therefore, to come to an understanding with Italy on the details of Arab policy. Nor were there any indications that agreement would bring any positive results from a German viewpoint. The Germans were therefore satisfied with Italy's change of position during the conversations and with her readiness to recognise the Arabs' right to unification.

Recognition of that right was necessary in order to counter the British promises and announcements in the Axis declaration. Fulfilment of the Arab demands was anyway a matter of the future and at that time had but a limited, propaganda significance.

FRENCH AND TURKISH OBJECTIONS

Italy's agreement to the issue of a declaration was not enough, as regards the balance of forces, to resolve the problem definitely. It was also necessary to reckon with Vichy. Ribbentrop's July 20th directive was formally still in force. It had replaced the previous order that no steps should be taken against French domination, but it had lost its usefulness since Franco-German relations had begun to change in the autumn of 1941. In November the Vichy Government finally agreed to remove Weygand from his North Africa post, 12 and Franco-German military conversations were resumed.¹³ With the British offensive taking place in the Western Desert (operation 'Crusader'), Vichy's attitude again assumed great importance in North Africa. In a despatch from Paris, 14 Abetz pointed out that an eventual declaration in support of Arab demands would exert a negative influence in France itself and on the French troops who might perhaps be called upon to defend North and West Africa. He referred to the recent example of the Levant, where a French Vichy army fought the British. In his opinion the ruling circles of France were taking into account the fact that after the war it would be impossible to avoid changes in the status of the Levant countries. He was nevertheless of the opinion that the Germans should consult

Vichy on France's future position in the Levant before issuing a declaration. Abetz concluded: 'Our interests with respect to France would therefore be better served if, at the least, some later date were chosen for the issuing of the projected German-Italian declaration'.

Auswärtiges Amt was aware of the difficulties involved in any conversation on the question with Vichy. For the Germans could not promise France anything, either politically or economically, in relation to the Levant. It was difficult to assure France that she would retain her former economic and financial position, since that 'would prejudice the settlement of the oil question' (i.e. the retention by the French of their share of Iraqi oil and of the Kirkuk-Tripolis pipeline). Germany could at most agree on a vague formulation that France's financial and economic interests would be considered, but the question was whether Vichy would agree, and if so, on what terms.

Just how unsuitable, from the point of view of Franco-German relations, the end of 1941 was is shown by the events of December and January. On December 1st Pétain met Goering at Saint-Florentinen-Bourgogne. After Hitler's conversations with Ribbentrop and Abetz on January 5th, 1942, there was one more attempt at a FrancoGerman rapprochement. 16 Under the circumstances, the German leaders did not want to aggravate the situation by issuing a declaration in support of Arab demands. Apart from the constant factors which shaped the relations between Berlin and Vichy (the chief among them being Vichy domination in North Africa and the need to entrust its army with the defence of Africa), subsidiary and temporary factors were in operation in 1941–2 which raised hopes of closer co-operation.

Turkey's position created further difficulties, and Turkey had to be reckoned with, since her future co-operation was an important factor in Germany's military plans for the Middle East. Von Papen thought that a declaration supporting Arab demands would arouse Turkey's dissatisfaction unless it was preceded by Turco-German conversations in accordance with the consultation pact concluded between them. He advised that Turkey should be assured that the planned declaration would not prejudice the future settlement of territorial matters (the Turks wanted Aleppo and perhaps also Mosul). Of course, von Papen bore in mind that Turkey could make use of such an assurance in bargaining with the British¹⁷ or that a situation might arise in which Germany and England would compete for Turkey's favour in return for territorial promises. Auswärtiges Amt considered that conversations with Turkey on the matter would be premature¹⁸ and opposed extending any promises.¹⁹ The proper time to talk to Turkey, the Nazis considered, would be when she

ceased prevaricating and went over to Germany's side under the impact of Hitler victories.

Hence the issue of a declaration met with greater difficulties this time from France and Turkey than from Italy. The Italians even acknowledged the need for haste in issuing the declaration in order not to be forestalled by the English.²⁰ On November 22nd Rome agreed on a text that had been corrected by the Germans.²¹

HITLER'S STANDPOINT

Hitler himself intervened at this moment. On November 28th he had an hour-and-a-half meeting with Hajj Amin el-Huseini in the presence of Ribbentrop and Grobba. It is perhaps of some significance that this conference was one of a score held by Hitler and Ribbentrop on November 25th-29th with pro-Fascist leaders from many countries who rallied to Berlin on the occasion of the renewal of the Anti-Comintern Pact. In preparation for this conference Ribbentrop submitted to Hitler a special memorandum on November 13th* and a personal exchange of views apparently took place between the Führer and his Foreign Minister.† There was also a meeting between Ribbentrop and the Mufti on November 28th, just before the conversation with Hitler. During his conversations with Ribbentrop and Hitler the Mufti stressed that the Germans and Arabs were natural friends, since both were fighting three common enemies: Britain, the Jews and Bolshevism. He offered to raise an Arab Legion and then directed the conversation to the question of the declaration.

After the usual tirade against the Jews, whom he considered to be the leaders of the states opposing him, Hitler declared to the Mufti: '. . . just a promise will be of no value. Only an assurance which rests on victorious armed forces is of real value.' And he added: 'Only if we win the war will the hour of liberation be also the hour of fulfilment of Arab aspirations.'

Hitler justified his negative attitude to the issuing of the declaration primarily by the fear of France's reaction. 'The situation presents itelf as follows', argued the Führer (according to the

* See DGFP, XIII, no. 468, pp. 774-9. In this memorandum Ribbentrop said, among other things, that 'the alpha and omega for the Arab world is a new political declaration of the Axis powers on independence for the Arab countries'. He asked Hiitler to receive the Mufti and proposed to establish a council of Arab leaders in Berlin and/or Rome.

† Brief for the Foreign Minister, Führer Headquarters, November 15th, 1941—DGFP, XIII, no. 475, pp. 786–7. Hewel expressed Hitler's wish to talk over personally in the next few days with Ribbentrop the problems raised in his memorandum before a final decision was made. It is the present author's impression that Ribbentrop's views were in favour of a declaration.

Mufti's notes on the conversation which roughly correspond in this point to Schmidt's record),

we are conducting a great fight in order to open for ourselves a road to the Northern Caucasus. The difficulties connected with this are more than those of transportation, brought about by the destruction of railways and roads, or by winter conditions. If I dare in this situation to issue a declaration applying also to Syria, the elements supporting de Gaulle in France will grow stronger, and that may induce a revolt. Those people will be convinced that it is profitable to join Great Britain, and the separation of Syria will be an example copied in other parts of the French empire. This would strengthen the position of the Gaullists in the colonies. If a declaration is issued now, difficulties will ensue in West Europe, so that it will be necessary to withdraw certain forces for defence which will prevent us from concentrating all our forces in the East.

Hitler assured the Mufti that Germany's uncompromising war against the Jews included active opposition to the Jewish national home in Palestine and that her objective was the destruction of the Jewish element residing in the Arab countries. He promised that he would issue a declaration when the German troops reached the Southern Caucasus, which, in his words, was a question of a few months. Hitler further declared to the Mufti that the time would come when he (Hajj Amin) would not only present the Arabs with an Axis declaration. He would also have the decisive voice in Arab affairs as the most authoritative spokesman for, and as the leader of, the Arabs.²² Hitler opposed, however, the Mufti's proposition of issuing a secret declaration or of contracting a secret treaty, since as he said, according to the Mufti's notes—a declaration known to several people cannot remain secret. According to Schmidt's record of this conversation, Hitler evasively answered that he had just given the Mufti precisely that confidential declaration. Hitler's decision not to issue a declaration was communicated the same day to Woermann by Rintelen.23

Hitler's motivations in arriving at that decision are not hard to imagine. His words, as noted by the Mufti, reflect primarily a general unwillingness to make declarations which would not be followed by direct action. The following day Ribbentrop took the same position in a conversation with Bose.²⁴ A declaration not supported by the force necessary to fulfil it, stressed the Nazi Foreign Minister, would be harmful. The Germans were even reluctant to expand organisational activity in relation to India until after the conquest of Tbilisi.

It would follow from the above that Hitler and his Ministers did not consider the time to be ripe for issuing a declaration, since they wanted it preceded by a great military victory. But there were no

such victories by the end of November. On the contrary, the German offensive on Moscow broke down definitely at that time, and a great counter-attack by the Soviet Army was to start shortly afterwards—on December 6th. In the Mediterranean the Axis situation was difficult and Rommel's troops retreated in the Western Desert under British pressure. The extent to which these events influenced the matter of a declaration is shown by the fact that Berlin decided to take a new look at the question after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour.²⁵

Hitler's further argument in the conversation with the Muftithat such a declaration would create difficulties with France—also reflected the real fears of the Reich Government. But he seems to have omitted some other arguments. He did not mention Turkey, whose position was so important to Germany's plans to attack the Middle East. It might have been quite natural, however, to forget Turkey in a conversation with the Mufti, for the Arabs were aware of Turkey's territorial ambitions. It is very likely that Hitler preferred to remain silent about Turkey's position in relation to the declaration because of the impression it would have made on the Arab leaders. Furthermore, aware of Britain's statements on Arab matters. Hitler could assume that a German declaration would evoke a new race between the two warring camps for Arab sympathy which might only create additional difficulties for the Germans, without any visible concrete advantages. The negative attitude to the publication of a declaration would change, anyway, when German troops crossed the Caucasus. Then the active sympathy of the population would be a significant factor. That would be the time, Hitler assured the Mufti, to announce a declaration in support of Arab aspirations.

Another argument which Ribbentrop used during his conference with the Mufti, and was employed by Hitler later during talks with the Italians in April 1942, was that a declaration would lead to a premature action by the followers of the Axis in the Arab lands and that the British might apprehend them. It is difficult to say how far this argument reflected Hitler's real fears. But it follows from the records of the Mufti's conversations with the Nazi top leaders as well as from other German memoranda that they had very much in mind the experience of the abortive Iraqi coup d'état. It is clear, however, that this argument was a corollary of Hitler's main point: without real effect on the war operations the declaration was for him worthless and even harmful. He needed a declaration in order to get from the Arabs real help in his war of conquest, whereas for the Mufti the value of a declaration lay in its enhancing his position among the Arabs and in its serving as a trump in the future postwar settlement.

Reservations of a legal-political character probably also influenced Hitler's negative attitude towards a declaration. El-Kilani was an émigré and the recognition of his Government would amount to the same as the Allies' recognition of the Polish Government-in-exile, or of the Dutch, Yugoslav or other countries under German occupation. The Nazi legal doctrine did not recognise émigré governments and German propaganda made the London governments-in-exile constant subjects of ridicule. A declaration on general Arab affairs, supposed to be addressed to the Mufti, presented other difficulties of a legal nature. For in such a declaration Germany would recognize the existence of an Arab nation embracing the citizens of a number of states. True, the Entente had extended such recognition to the Poles and Czechs during World War I,26 but that precedent was not universally accepted. A further implication of such a declaration would be to recognise the Mufti as the leader of all the Arab countries involved, whereas he only had formal pretensions to leadership of the Palestinian Arabs, since he had been, for many years, chairman of the Supreme Muslim Council and President of the Arab Higher Committee.

FURTHER ATTEMPTS AT A DECLARATION

Hitler's decision did not put an end to the attempts of either the Arab leaders or the Italians to get a declaration and the German officials engaged in Middle East problems did not abandon the idea. In the meantime el-Kilani arrived in Berlin, and as the recognised Prime Minister of Iraq, demanded that Germany should clearly state her position on the question of a declaration. He had also been empowered to negotiate with the Germans by a conference of influential Arab exiles that had been held in Turkey at the end of October 1941.27 His demands went far beyond the borders of Iraq. At the beginning of December he submitted a draft treaty between Germany and Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Transjordan, which was also to include Palestine. It contained all the well-known points: the fight against England; the elimination of the Jews from Palestine; Arab unity; economic, military, technical and cultural co-operation with the Axis Powers; participation of the Arab countries in the Tripartite Pact (which held a conference with great pomp in Berlin at the end of November), and in the coming peace conference. El-Kilani demanded from the Axis nothing less than recognition of 'the complete independence and full sovereignty' of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Yemen and the other Arab states in the Near East, as well as a declaration of readiness to conclude treaties with them and for German agreement to the union or federation of some or all of them.²⁸

Of course, there was no question of the Germans meeting el-Kilani's demands. They went far beyond what the Axis was ready to promise the Arabs, and the Mufti had shortly before been refused a declaration by Hitler. El-Kilani stood on much firmer ground with his request for a document on Iraq, as the Axis had some special obligations towards him regarding this country. With Hitler's agreement²⁹ and Italy's consent³⁰ he obtained an official letter from the Reich Foreign Minister promising that he would be the Premier of liberated Iraq and expressing the readiness of the Reich Government to commence negotiations at once on future co-operation.³¹ Although the letter did not indicate that it should be kept secret, they saw no reason to give wide publicity to its contents. It might have had some general political importance, but its omission of the question of Arab unity greatly weakened its propaganda value.

This letter officially confirmed el-Kilani's status in Germany. The natural course for him to follow was to obtain a treaty for Iraq as quickly as possible. What is more, this letter emphasised, by contrast, the Mufti's lack of any formal status. But he was undoubtedly the stronger personality and wielded greater influence in the Arab world than Kilani. Hajj Amin also now wanted a letter with a Nazi promise to support the formation of a Greater Syria, which was to be kept secret. The Mufti wanted German recognition of his status as a spokesman for the North Arabian countries, and he declared that in case of a German refusal he would get such recognition from Italy, which meant that he would only serve Rome.* He further made it understood that he would aim to continue Axis propaganda on condition that he received such a letter or declaration.³² His demands were accepted by Italian representatives, who since the end of 1941 had favoured a declaration supporting Arab demands, of course within the above-cited limits. The Italians may have taken this position because they realised that besides the need for propaganda among the Arabs it was important to attract the leaders to their side.

Another Pan-Arabist project was connected with the desired declaration: the convocation of a council of Arab leaders.³³ This project grew out of the reservations on the rights of el-Kilani and Hajj Amin to speak in the name of all the Arabs. The Arab leaders who fled to Turkey were to guarantee, in the names of their countries, that any understandings reached by the Axis with the Mufti and

^{*} Grobba's notes, Berlin, January 21st and 26th, 1942—71/51007-9 and 71/50999-51002. The Mufti's position testifies to the fact that he accepted the limitations projected by the Axis on the Pan-Arabist plans. It is also interesting that this consummate politician tried to win over the Axis leaders in such a clumsy fashion when his ambitions were affected.

Rashid Ali would be carried out.* But this attempt was also in vain.

The idea of a declaration gained Japan's support at the end of 1941 and the beginning of 1942. As they were approaching nearer to the borders of India, the Japanese suggested a joint tri-power declaration on India and the Arab countries.³⁴ The Japanese draft was rather a propaganda appeal than a diplomatic document with more or less defined obligations. But the Germans were not enthusiastic about Japanese interference. To issue such a joint declaration with Japan would first require a discussion of the future of the territories situated between the European Zone and the Japanese 'Greater East Asia'. The Tripartite Pact took no decision on the allocation of these areas and each of the partners had his own plans and hopes in relation to these lands.† In April, when the question was to be resolved of Japan's further advance westwards to the waters touching the shores of Iran, the Arabian Peninsula and East Africa, the Japanese energetically demanded a decision from Germany on the draft declaration.³⁵ It seems that Japan wanted to participate in decisions on Arab matters in exchange for her agreement to the other Axis partners taking part in resolutions relating to India.36 The Italians supported Japan's view. As Ciano notes several times in his diary, Mussolini aimed to support Japan as a counter-weight to German power.³⁷ This was perhaps one reason why Italian representatives were so consistently in favour of issuing a declaration. They also wanted their future to be assured in the Arab countries after the Axis victory. The question was raised at the meeting between Hitler and Mussolini in Salzburg at the end of April and beginning of May 1942. As is known from Schmidt's report, Ribbentrop favoured a joint German, Italian and Japanese declaration, but Hitler again opposed the idea³⁸ and the decision was therefore negative.³⁹

* The guarantors were to be: Naji Shawkat and Dr. Muhammed Hasan Salman for Iraq; Emir Adel Arslan for Syria; Abd el-Karim Sebawi for Lebanon; Ishaq Derwish for Palestine and Dr. Abu Ghanima for Transjordan (71/51003-6). The majority of these were connected with the Mufti.

† See the notes of Count von Urach on the conversation with the Marquis Lanza d'Ajeta, bureau chief in the Palazzo Chigi (Berlin, March 17th, 1942—71/51079), and Ott's despatch (Tokyo, April, 23rd, 1942—71/51111-16). It is interesting to recall that Berlin considered the question of India before Japan entered the war. Independence propaganda was also conducted by Bose from Berlin. The organisation of an Indian Legion started in Berlin composed of Axis war prisoners. Bose only moved to Japan in the autumn of 1942. (See the collection Die arabische und indische Legion—The Arab and Indian Legion—Ser. no. 86, and Kulturpolitische Abteilung, Berichte über die Lage in Indien und Zuweisungen und Pläne für die Indien-propaganda—Cultural Policy Division. Reports on the Situation in India and Allocations and Plans for Propaganda in India—DZA, Potsdam, AA, 48004.)

Mussolini renewed his efforts for a declaration⁴⁰ a few days after the Salzburg meeting, but without success.

Arab attempts to get a declaration paralleled the above conversations and bargaining. At the beginning of February 1942 both Arab leaders went to Rome, accompanied by Dr. Grobba. El-Kilani was received by Count Ciano on the 1st, by the King on the 14th and by Mussolini on the 15th and 18th of February. The Mufti only had an audience with the King on the 13th.41 Whether because of his unclear position from the formally legal standpoint or because the Italians wished to win el-Kilani's sympathy, el-Huseini received a cold reception. From the outset pride of place in Rome was given to el-Kilani. Audiences and the right to ride in an automobile bearing Iraqi colours were the outward attributes of his position, to the chagrin of Hajj Amin. 42 Many Arab personalities, mostly Iraqis, arrived in Rome at the beginning of March. 43 The questions of a declaration, of Arab unification, and of fighting by the side of the Axis troops were kept constantly alive. New consultations followed with German representatives on the question of the possible effects of a declaration. This time Germany's Ambassador to Turkey was more or less overlooked.*

Abetz's opinion remained unchanged. In elaborate notes reflecting his exasperation at the non-fulfilment of the promises made to France in May 1941, the Reich's Ambassador repeated all the old arguments and added some new ones. A declaration, he argued, would exert a negative influence on the forces favouring collaboration. It would have a bad effect on the morale of the French troops who 'will some day have to defend Morocco or Dakar from Anglo-Saxon attacks'. It would have a wide echo among the North African Arabs to whom the Germans would not give a promise of independence out of regard for Italian, French and Spanish interests. Abetz finally restated his thesis that Arab questions should be subordinated to the general problem of Axis-Vichy relations.⁴⁴ But the chiefs of the German Consulates at Casablanca and Algiers had entirely different opinions. One of them thought that the repercussions of such a declaration among North African Arabs would not be great and that its limitations would be recognised by public opinion as a matter of political tactics. But he did express the fear that a declaration would arouse anxiety among the French.45 The other did not even believe that the French living in Algeria would react any differently from Vichy to a declaration, since its position in North

^{*} We have not found any opinion by von Papen on the question of a declaration either in February or March 1942. It is not ruled out that at this phase the Germans treated it as a formal question and only wanted the arguments to be presented to the Arabs.

Africa had been strengthened after the recall of Weygand.⁴⁶
Auswärtiges Amt estimated that the harm caused by issuing a declaration would not be serious. What is more, they thought that the difficulty might grow with the development of the Japanese offensive and political initiative in West Asian and East African affairs. But they saw no special compulsion, on the other hand, for Germany to issue such a declaration, since the military situation had improved in the Mediterranean and Rommel's victories in North Africa spoke for themselves. It was true the Arab leaders demanded a declaration, but it was clear that they could be satisfied with secret promises given in writing.*

THE EXCHANGE OF LETTERS

A decision was finally taken in the above spirit. First of all Rashid Ali's proposition for a treaty between the Axis and Iraq was put into effect. It was agreed to handle this matter by means of an exchange of letters to contain all the points of el-Kilani's draft.⁴⁷ The Italians had just a few reservations with which the Germans agreed.⁴⁸ On March 25th el-Kilani accepted the drafts prepared by the Italian Foreign Ministry and an official exchange of letters between him and Count Ciano took place on March 31st.⁴⁹

Rashid Ali opened his letter to Ciano with an expression of confidence in the Axis and its aims. He followed with a declaration in the name of the Iraqi people of their readiness to fight Great Britain and of their desire to establish close and lasting co-operation between the three countries involved. The letter contained the following obligations:

- (a) To take part in the war on the side of the Axis until victory. But this was of small significance at the given time. Only a few Arabs, those in territories under Axis control, could enter the Arab Legion. The Arabs in general and the Iraqis in particular had little opportunity to participate in battles. This obligation could be of importance only in the event that Axis troops entered Iraq.
- (b) The annulment of all 'treaties, privileges and concessions which linked Iraq with Great Britain and her allies on the planes of state or private relations'. This point primarily reflected Axis interest in Iraqi oil.
- (c) Establishment between Iraq, Germany and Italy of close and lasting co-operation. This was meant to indicate that Iraq would be obliged to turn to these powers for aid in the development of the
- * From Woermann's notes to Ribbentrop (Berlin, February 28th, 1942—71/51051) it would follow that Ribbentrop issued a directive on February 23rd on the question of France and Arab policy. But we have not found it in the acts.

country and in the reorganisation and rearming of her army. It is worth recalling that Iraq undertook similar obligations under the treaty with Britain.

Rashid Ali formulated certain demands upon the Axis Powers in relation to supporting Iraq's postulates at the future peace conference. The At this point the letter deviated from Rashid Ali's own draft, which carried an explicit reference to German and Italian help in obtaining indemnities from Great Britain for the invasion of Iraq in April and May 1941. The Italians preferred a much more general formulation. Similarly rejected was el-Kilani's demand for an Axis obligation not to conclude any treaties that contradicted the contents of the agreement with Iraq. The Italians preferred a much more general formulation.

Ciano's letter, in the form of a reply to Rashid Ali, in the main contained a confirmation of the above obligations. But it also stipulated that the complete independence and full sovereignty of Iraq was one of the aims of the Axis, fully agreed to by the German and Italian Governments. Ciano declared that Italy was ready to cooperate with Rashid Ali and the Iraqi nation in freeing Iraq from British domination and undertook the obligation of 'supplying the Iraqi army and nation' with arms and equipment required for that purpose. Italy was also ready, Ciano assured him, to fulfil, within the range of possibility, Iraq's desires in the fields of investment, technical aid and armaments. Both letters concluded with the warning that their contents should not be disclosed without a decision by both sides to that effect.⁵²

On May 18th the exchange of identical letters took place in Berlin through the mediation of Woermann.⁵³ They were signed by Rashid Ali and von Ribbentrop.

This exchange of letters, like the other forms of recognition awarded to Rashid Ali by both Axis Powers, further embittered the Mufti of Jerusalem. A mutual aversion developed between the two Arab leaders, although Rashid Ali raised the matter of a general Arab declaration of independence to be presented to the Mufti.⁵⁴ He did so in a conversation with Ribbentrop and Ciano on March 25th, when the exchange of letters on Iraq was finally agreed upon. How deeply Hajj Amin was affected by the achievements of el-Kilani is attested by his conversation with Granow. He used the strongest expressions precisely after the agreement on the exchange of letters, declaring that he would not resume pro-Axis propaganda activities unless he received a letter of recognition. He even threatened to retire to Spain or Hungary.⁵⁵

The Mufti's excitement was without any real foundation, however, for the Axis Powers had no desire to favour el-Kilani in any way. Actually, conversations and preparatory work on draft documents

on general Arab postulates began early in April and the demands of the Arab leaders in this direction were conceded. It was agreed that both leaders should address identical letters, one each to Ribbentrop and Ciano, for which they would receive two separate replies.⁵⁶ The drafts of the letters agreed to by Germany and Italy were submitted to Rashid Ali and Hajj Amin on April 25th.⁵⁷ The two Arab leaders could not make any changes in the draft. The exchange of letters between them and Ribbentrop took place on April 28th⁵⁸ and the exchange of the identical letters with Ciano on May 3rd, 1942.⁵⁹

The Mufti-el-Kilani letter began by expressing confidence in the Axis and in its 'noble aims'. It offered assurance that the Arab people were ready to fight against the common enemy to final victory. Its most important section was the request for a German and/or Italian Government declaration that: (1) it was ready to assist the Arab countries now suffering under British rule; (2) it recognised the sovereignty and independence of the Arab countries of the Near East suffering British oppression; (3) it agreed to their unification if such should be the will of the eventual participants; (4) it favoured the liquidation of the Jewish national home in Palestine.

The reply confirmed the contents of the letter. Thus the Axis states finally made the desired declaration on the Arab demands. But it was a secret statement with a stipulation against its disclosure, similar to that contained in the letter on the question of Iraq. It also contained the usual limitations. It thus used the formula 'countries of the Arab Near East', limiting the territorial range of the promises to the countries of the Fertile Crescent. In contradistinction to the formula 'complete independence and full sovereignty' contained in the letter on Iraq, here the words 'independence and sovereignty' were used without the adjectives. This difference makes possible a different interpretation of the promises of the general Arab declaration. The unification of the Arab countries was made dependent, as Woermann proposed, on the agreement of the participants (Beteiligten).* The concept participant, wrote Woermann, may also include France. Thus the obligations assumed by the Axis were not only secret; they were also hypocritical. Only the promise to liquidate the Jewish national home in Palestine was unambiguous.

It appears that the Axis did not attach very much importance to this secret declaration. Although in his diary Ciano mentions the declaration on the question of 'a free Arabia and a free India', he fails to note the exchange of letters. Evidently the Axis did not expect much from the declarations. They considered rather that the

^{*} In his notes (Berlin, April 4th, 1942—71/51082—4) Woermann expressed his doubts on whether the Mufti would agree to that formulation.

only decisive factor would be the victory of their arms. The declarations were most probably issued in order not to antagonise the Arab leaders, who might be needed in the future, but at the time they rendered useful service to the German and Italian propaganda machines.

The Arab leaders were well aware of the limitations and ambiguity of the promises they received. But like Sherif Husein in relation to Britain some twenty-odd years before, they counted not so much on the promises as on the objective situation which would arise from an Axis victory. They needed the declarations as evidence of their achievements, for propaganda purposes, and last but not least, as a document regulating their political status under Hitler and Mussolini domination.

On May 2nd, 1942, Hajj Amin and Rashid Ali broadcast speeches on the Axis radio in commemoration of the first anniversary of the war in Iraq. On this occasion they made use of the promises they had received in the secret letters. But it is very doubtful if their speeches made any special impression. For this time, too, it was Arab nationalist leaders and not Axis spokesmen who used excerpts from those letters. 'The significance of the speeches by the Mufti and Kilani on Radio Rome on May 2nd was not generally understood', wrote a German official two months later, when relating conversations with representatives of the Arab exiles in Istanbul.*

* Seiler related in a despatch (Istanbul, July 1st, 1942—71/51154-5) a conversation between Granow (of Dienststelle Grobba) and prominent representatives of Arab exiles who, impressed by Rommel's victories in Egypt, demanded that a declaration of Arab independence should be issued.

XII

THE AXIS EGYPT OFFENSIVE



THE WAR SITUATION IN THE SPRING AND SUMMER OF 1942

HILE negotiations and bargaining were taking place in Berlin and Rome towards the end of 1941 and beginning of 1942 on the question of a declaration supporting Arab demands, the military situation in the Mediterranean began to change in favour of the Axis. True, General Rommel's forces continued to withdraw until January 7th, 1942, under British pressure, to the town of el-Ageila. But the front held there. In the autumn of 1941 the German command shifted several naval units from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean and later transferred some aerial units from the Eastern Front. These measures, plus the assignment of Field-Marshal Kesselring as commander of the Southern Front, enabled the Germans to exert a greater influence from then on on the Mediterranean operations.

The results began to be felt by the end of 1941, when the victories of Britain's land forces in the Western Desert were accompanied by serious naval defeats. The Italian Navy sank several enemy units, such as the aircraft-carrier Ark Royal and the warships Barham, Valiant and Oueen Elizabeth—the last two in Alexandria harbour by human torpedoes. At the same time (December 10th) the British fleet suffered a painful defeat in the Far East. On December 18th and January 5th the Italian Naval Command sent a strong convoyprotecting force to North Africa, greatly reinforcing the Axis there, but this could not be continued for lack of fuel. The question of using Tunisian ports to equip the African troops now became important. On December 29th, 1941, Mussolini sent Hitler a letter pointing out that the convoy of transports to Africa involved so much oil that it had become impossible to supply that fuel to the African front even in the amounts which were indispensable for defensive operations. He stressed that it was not possible to plan an offensive without the assurance of bases in Tunisia. In the Duce's opinion,

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these bases had to be acquired by an understanding with Vichy or by force.¹ Hitler rejected the idea of an agreement with Vichy, because he did not wish to meet the conditions which would be presented by Pétain, and he objected to using force for fear of the repercussions throughout French Africa.²

Rommel launched a counter-offensive on January 21st and within a few days regained a good part of the terrain lost to Britain. But he failed to reach Tobruk. He took Mekhili and Temimi on February 5th and the front was consolidated on that line to the end of May 1942.

Such was the military situation when the German and Italian staffs proceeded to review the plan of future war operations in the Mediterranean. Two different conceptions were apparent in the deliberations. The Italian Comando Supremo was of the opinion that the occupation of Malta was the precondition for success in North Africa. The removal of this road-block, they argued, would make more regular and safer provisioning of the troops possible. But the German Command thought air action alone could cripple Malta. OKW finally agreed to support Italy in invading Malta and Kesselring communicated Hitler's agreement on April 22nd.³ The question of Malta was again on the agenda during a meeting of the Italian and German High Commands at Obersalzberg on April 29th-30th. A compromise plan was adopted which was defended by Kesselring. It was based on Rommel's strategic concepts. The landing on Malta was to be postponed until after the British had been defeated in the Western Desert, so as to prevent a counter-attack to aid the island's defenders. At a meeting in Berchtesgaden (May 1st) a decision was taken for Rommel to direct an offensive at the end of the month, take Tobruk and advance eastward, but not farther than the Egyptian border. He was then to go over to the defensive while the Axis' main efforts were concentrated on the conquest of Malta (operation 'Hercules').4 Only after Malta had been taken and the communications secured were Rommel's troops to invade Egypt. Operation 'Hercules' was to commence in July 1942, but that decision was changed. In the meantime Malta was the unceasing objective of Axis air raids.

Because of the constant bombardment of Malta in April and May, Axis military transports had an easier route to North Africa, but there was no question of amassing greater reserves. For the German Afrika-Korps alone required 40,000–50,000 tons of equipment monthly. Rommel resumed the offensive on May 26th and scored several quick victories: at Bir-Hakim on June 10th, in the battle with British tanks at el-Adm on June 12th-13th, occupation of Sidi Rezeg, June 17th, and of Tobruk on the 21st. Malta was now due to be invaded.

On June 22nd the new Field-Marshal (for Rommel had received the Marshal's baton after capturing Tobruk) communicated to von Rintelen that he was against stopping the offensive* and asked that Mussolini and OKW be informed to that effect. The most important thing, he asserted, was not to allow the British to create a new front. Rommel was convinced that he enjoyed considerable superiority over the British and that the spirit of his troops was excellent. At Tobruk the Germans captured a great deal of war material and Rommel was therefore anxious to chase the British beyond the borders of Egypt and to open up the way to Alexandria and Suez. He intervened with Hitler to that end.

Hitler, anyway, was cool to operation 'Hercules' and in a letter to Mussolini of June 23rd supported Rommel's demand that the Duce should cancel the order not to cross the Egyptian border.⁵ The idea of getting to Suez was a great temptation indeed for Mussolini. Despite the differing views of his advisers, he approved Rommel's desire and left for Africa on June 29th. The white horse on which he expected to enter the Egyptian capital in triumph was shipped by plane. Marsa Matruh fell the same day and Rommel stood before el-Alamein on July 1st.⁶

But here Rommel's army met strong British resistance. The English even counter-attacked and managed to gain some territory. However, the assault on the Axis' main positions on July 21st-26th failed. Thus the forces faced each other at el-Alamein, in preparation for the offensive that was the decide the destiny of Egypt, of the Arab countries and the entire Middle East.

An Axis victory in North Africa could have had a tremendous effect on the course of the war. For in that event the Axis would have controlled the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal and would have thus acquired the vast Middle East oil deposits. And that was precisely what some German circles—Rommel's staff for instance—thought when planning the Egypt offensive.

The Germans developed an offensive at the same time at a distance of about 2,000 kilometres north of Egypt, at the southern sector of the Soviet front. What transpired on that front was to determine the outcome of World War II. As shown above, the Nazi rulers related their plans in the Middle East to the battles on that Soviet front.

The offensive on the Eastern Front developed in two main directions: east and south. The latter was decisive for Germany's

^{*} E. von Rintelen, Mussolini als Bundesgenosse—Mussolini as an Ally—Tübingen and Stuttgart, 1951, p. 169. Rommel wrote post-factum (Krieg ohne Hass—War without Hate—Heidenheim, 1950, p. 126): 'Before commencement of the offensive Malta was . . . to be conquered, but for some incomprehensible reason our highest authorities gave up that intention.'

plans to invade Iran and the Arab countries. As in 1941, the Germans at first pushed forward despite the resistance of the Soviet Army. But they were prevented from carrying out their planned schedule. Rostov fell on July 23rd, Maikop was taken on August 25th. The German forces crossed into Mozdok on August 8th and reached Novorossiisk on September 10th. Greatly strengthened with units of various arms, Sonderstab F moved to the town of Budionovskaya on the Kuma River.8 On August 25th the Germans were at the Volga.

It appeared that the moment of decision was nearing for Nazi policy in the Arab countries. In Africa the Axis forces stood at the gates of Alexandria and the conquest of Egypt seemed near—with all its evident political implications. As a centre of Italian interest, Egypt was an Italian theatre of war and its conquest was to be directed by the Italian command. German forces, however, played an ever greater role in this operation and the German command was acquiring an ever-growing influence there. But the Germans officially recognised the countries of the Mediterranean, hence also Egypt, as belonging to the Italian sphere of influence. The negotiations on the question of an Arab declaration showed that the Italians displayed greater restraint in everything relating to Egypt than they did towards the Northern Arab countries; and the Nazis had to reckon with all this in their policies.

GERMAN-EGYPTIAN CONTACTS

As indicated above, Egypt's ruling circles sought to establish contact with Germany. There is evidence in Auswärtiges Amt documents that the Egyptian chargé d'affaires in Berne, Asal-bey,9 Prince Muhammed Ibrahim, 10 the Istanbul Consul-General Hafiz Amr, 11 Ambassador at Tehran, the father-in-law of King Farouk, Zulficarpasha,12 and others, directly or indirectly contacted German diplomatic posts even before the attack on the Soviet Union. Further connections were made in October at Tarabya, when Dr. Samir Zulficar-bey visited von Papen, and in November 1941,13 when the Egyptian envoy to the Vichy Government and employees of the Legation made approaches to German officials. Most important was the contact with Zulficar-pasha, who in April 1941 approached Ettel, Germany's envoy at Tehran, in the name of King Farouk and on his specific instructions. Zulficar-pasha pointed out the situation the King found himself in under constant British pressure. He expressed Farouk's sympathy and respect for Hitler and Germany, as well as his best wishes for victory over England. The King and his nation, he declared, would like to see Germany's liberating troops in Egypt as soon as possible. On Ettel's question regarding Egypt's attitude to

Italy, Zulficar-pasha replied that now, when German soldiers were also fighting in North Africa, the Egyptians felt certain that the Germans were coming as liberators and not as new oppressors like the Italians.

On April 30th, 1941, Ettel received a statement for the Egyptian Ambassador in reply to the message from King Farouk.¹⁴ Ribbentrop assured the King, in Hitler's name, that Germany's fight was not directed against Egypt or indeed any Arab country, but only against England. The Axis Powers, said the statement, desired once and for all to eliminate Great Britain from Europe and the Near East and to establish a new order 'based upon the principle of respect for the rightful interests of all nations'. Germany, assured Ribbentrop, has no territorial claims on the Arab countries, while Hitler and Mussolini wanted the independence of Egypt and of the entire Arab world. Ettel was instructed to request the Ambassador to submit this statement to the King and to inform him of Germany's readiness to establish closer bonds of co-operation with Egypt. Ribbentrop's proposal that they should make the necessary contacts in Bucharest or Ankara did not materialise, because Zulficar-pasha wanted himself to be the intermediary in negotiations and conversations.¹⁵ Farouk maintained contact with the Germans during the whole of 1941.* At the same time the Reich put some trust in the Wafd, which was then in opposition to the pro-British Government of Husein Sirri-pasha. Later, in 1942, when the Wafd held the helm of government, the Germans sought contact with this party, the largest in Egypt. 16 As can be gathered from Ettel's conversation with Zulficarpasha of July 2nd, 1941, at the request of the Auswärtiges Amt administration on the basis of special instructions,† the Nazi Government was interested in the fate of Aziz Ali el-Masri, Azzam-pasha and Ali Maher-pasha.‡

In October 1941 Zulficar-pasha's brother, Dr. Samir Zulficar-bey, approached von Papen at Tarabya. He presented himself as supposedly acting by order of King Farouk as well as on behalf of three

*The King, for instance, warned the Germans in a despatch on June 29th of the planned seizure by British troops of the Iranian oil fields (Ettel's despatch, Tehran, July 3rd, 1941—DGFP, XIII, no. 66, pp. 77–78).

† Ribbentrop to Ettel, Berlin June 30th, 1941—ibid., no. 49, pp. 54-55. These instructions revealed that the plan to send Hentig as special deputy to carry on the discussions with Zulficar-pasha was called off and a rather cautious approach to the strengthening of contacts with Egypt prevailed in view of the unfavourable developments in Iraq.

‡ Abd er-Rahman Azzam was a member of Ali Maher-pasha's Cabinet and one of his closest co-workers. He was removed from the post of Chief of the Territorial Army in May 1941. In 1945 he became the first Secretary-General of the Arab League. Like Ali Maher, he was a partisan of the King at the beginning of the war.

Egyptian parties: the Wafd, the Watani party and the Liberal Constitutionalists. In the name of this strange coalition he demanded complete independence for Egypt and an assurance that she would not be allocated to the Italian sphere of influence. He asked that the bombardment of Cairo should cease and supplied some information about the location of British troops and installations in Egypt. He maintained that his principals' desire was to promote a favourable atmosphere for an occupation by the Axis and, if possible, even to come to the aid of the Axis troops.* The Germans, however, were not inclined to make promises, either on complete independence for Egypt or on not bombarding Cairo.

The Axis Powers also maintained contact with Egyptians living in Europe. There existed, for instance, the Egyptian National Society in Europe, supported by the Italian Government with Naser et-Tayyeb as president.¹⁷ But the most important Egyptian personality then living in occupied Europe was the ex-Khedive of Egypt, Abbas Hilmi II, dethroned by England in 1914. Born in 1874, educated at the Vienna Theresianum, he lived in Germany for a long time. He was an old friend of Germany and of the Turkish Sultan. Abbas Hilmi had close relations with many Germans who operated on Turkish territory before and during World War I. They included von Hentig and Prüfer, Auswärtiges Amt officials. A man of great wealth, he had good relations with German industrialists, 18 numerous contacts in European high society and many friends in Turkey.† He supported several Arab leaders.‡ His views represented a mixture of political realism and aristocratic snobbishness. He did not regard Pan-Arabism seriously but rather as an illusion, denying the Arabs' aptitude to state formation, organisation and diplomacy.¹⁹ Abbas Hilmi II maintained contact with the Abwehr and Auswärtiges Amt. His European financial interests²⁰ probably played a big role in his friendly relations with the Nazi authorities. He renounced the Egyptian throne and made a declaration to that effect at Lausanne (May 12th, 1931), but he made it clear later that he claimed the throne for his son. The fact that Abbas Hilmi stayed in Europe was an important factor in Farouk's seeking contacts with the Germans in order to safeguard his dynastic rights in the event of an Axis victory.21

^{*} Von Papen to AA, Tarabya, October 6th, 1941—DGFP, XIII, no. 385, pp. 618–20. The Wafd was in opposition to the court and to the prevailing Egyptian Government in which the Liberal Constitutionalists played an important role. The Watani party was at that time a small anti-British group whose main occupation was rivalry with the greatest of Egypt's parties—the Wafd.

[†] Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 15th, 1941—266/173598-9. Abbas Hilmi's Turkish friends were, of course, opponents of the Kemalist régime.

[‡] Thus Shekib Arslan, for example, received money from him.

Farouk's apprehensions were not entirely baseless, for Abbas Hilmi certainly did try to gain the Germans' favour. In the middle of April he expressed a desire to meet Ribbentrop or someone else of the top circles,²² but nothing came of it that time. However, von Hentig came to Paris towards the end of June and received certain information there from the Khedive as well as an offer of co-operation.²³ Auswärtiges Amt had no intentions, from the outset, of supporting Hilmi's dynastic claims, but considered it desirable to utilise his wide contacts abroad. It therefore directed the Paris Embassy to keep in touch with him.²⁴ And this relation remained unchanged after Abbas Hilmi's visit to Berlin²⁵ (September 25th–28th, 1941).

It seems that news of Abbas Hilmi's contact with the Germans, perhaps also of his Berlin visit, aroused anxiety at the Egyptian royal court. On January 30th, 1942, Siri Omar-bey, confidant of King Farouk and Axis sympathiser, asked the Bulgarian envoy to submit a statement to the Germans that the King, his relations and adherents were on the side of the Axis and that they made no secret of this. The statement also ensured that the Germans were informed that Farouk knew of Abbas Hilmi's intrigues to undermine Berlin's confidence in him and to replace him when the Axis had won the war.* The direct reason for this visit to the Bulgarian envoy was the rupture of diplomatic relations between Egypt and Vichy. King Farouk opposed the rupture out of fear that it would harm his position with the Germans.

As a result of Farouk's intervention Ribbentrop advised against any contact with the ex-Khedive.²⁶ True, this decision was shortly afterwards annulled by certain forces in Auswärtiges Amt and the Abwehr,²⁷ but Abbas Hilmi continued to confront difficulties in his attempts at political contacts.† Thus it was that the Germans decided on the eve of the Egypt offensive to collaborate with Farouk, and at any rate refrain from naming any new candidate for the throne of Egypt. The Italian Government, because of their friendly relations with Farouk,²⁸ also decided not to contact Abbas Hilmi on Arab affairs.

As mentioned above, the German Government in general stuck

- * Beckerle's despatch, Sofia, March 7th, 1942—266/173683—6. The legations of the Axis' Balkan satellites continued to function in Cairo for a long time, but their right to send despatches in code was annulled in April 1941. The Bulgarian envoy left Egypt in March 1942 and the news of that conversation only then reached the Germans.
- † Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 1st, 1942—266/173690-1. Abbas Hilmi was forbidden to travel to Istanbul, for instance, to meet his grandson, Prince Muneim, who had come from Cairo. The Abwehr had already provided him with an extensive questionnaire for that meeting.

to the principle that the time had not come to discuss the future of the territories regarded as being in the Italian sphere of influence.²⁹ The lack of any trace in German documents of conversations with Italy on the future of Egypt is a particularly striking fact. This German policy to postpone all decisions to the time when the situation would allow a frank discussion with Italy found expression in many of the political steps taken in 1942. Often however, as in the case of relations with the ex-Khedive, the situation required an immediate political decision, but mostly secondary questions were involved.

COUP D'ÉTAT IN EGYPT

In the meantime Egypt had become the arena of important political events. When the Husein Sirri-pasha Government broke off diplomatic relations with Vichy, King Farouk—now manifesting more or less openly his animosity to Great Britain—demanded the dismissal of the Foreign Minister, Salib Sami-pasha, who was a Copt.³⁰ Farouk justified his demand by the fact that he was out of Cairo when the diplomatic break with Vichy took place and he was not consulted. Ali Maher and his friends were the power behind the throne and student demonstrations took place in Cairo when Husein Sirri supported his colleague, the Foreign Minister. Dissatisfaction was rife in the country at the time because of the lack of provisions. At the same time the German victories in Cyrenaica and the British and American defeats in the Far East exerted a tremendous influence on popular opinion in the towns. Husein Sirri-pasha's Government resigned on February 2nd.

On the following day, before beginning consultations with the political parties, the King was visited by the British Ambassador, Sir Miles Lampson. Contrary to the opinion he had expressed a few days previously, that Husein Sirri should remain in power, the British Ambassador now criticised his Government. He complained of the Cabinet's incompetence and made it understood that he blamed the royal court for the unsatisfactory results of Husein Sirri's policies. What is more, he demanded that the King should appoint a government that could count on popular support, hence one headed by Mustafa en-Nahhas-pasha, the leader of the Wafd party. This of necessity had to be a Wafd Government, since the British Ambassador knew the Wafd absolutely opposed any coalition. It should be recalled that the Wafd supported the demand for declaring Cairo an open city and were increasingly critical of British policy in Egypt.31 We can only therefore hazard an assumption on the reasons for the change in Britain's policy towards that party. A logical supposition is that the English preferred the replacement of

the incompetent Cabinet of a clique of pashas by one formed by a party enjoying popular support, as such a government was certain to be against Italy. The British considered that their agreement to the restoration of the Wafd to power would be a trump they could utilise in the last extreme.³² Soon such a moment did arrive. London probably wanted to bar the way, as effectively as possible, to a Government controlled by the King and Ali Maher-pasha, who were correctly regarded as the chief supporters of the Axis in Egypt, and, at the same time, to calm the atmosphere by establishing a Wafdist Government.

The King replied to the protestations of the British Ambassador that he was consulting with the leaders of the political parties including the Wafd, since he intended to establish a coalition government.* On the afternoon of February 4th the Ambassador again warned Farouk, this time in the form of an ultimatum, that he would bear the consequences if Nahhas were not invested by six o'clock that evening. Since Farouk had not complied with the demand by the appointed time, the Ambassador called at nine o'clock, accompanied by the Commander-in-Chief of the British troops in Egypt, General R. G. W. H. Stone, who came with an infantry detachment and three light tanks. An hour later the King informed the political parties of his decision to entrust Nahhas with the mission of forming a Government. It may be concluded from the existing reports on these events that the leaders of the pro-British political groups by no means supported the demands of the British Ambassador.

The Wafd Cabinet gave Britain as much support as could be expected in Egypt in the spring and summer of 1942, when the Allies' fortunes were at their lowest ebb, and when an Axis victory was almost universally expected. Of course, there was no question of Egypt's direct participation in the war.

How did the Axis powers react to these events? As an ancient enemy of the Wafd—which in 1936 had committed itself to signing a treaty with Great Britain out of fear of Mussolini's incursions in Africa—Italy came out against the new Government. The Italian leaders were excellently informed of the Egyptian events. On February 11th the Stefani agency published the news, ostensibly from some correspondent in Lisbon,† of the events of February 3rd and 4th. The Italians understood that the King opposed a Wafd Government, for the animosity between the palace and the Wafd was well known.

As may be gathered from Auswärtiges Amt documents, the Ger-

^{*} A conference of political party leaders was actually called, but it brought no results. (See J. Lugol, *Egypt and World War II*, Cairo, 1945, pp. 311–12.)

[†] In order to conceal the true source. This manoeuvre was successful. (See G. Kirk, *The Middle East and the War*, London, 1954, p. 208, n. 3).

mans had no conception of what was happening in Egypt, for all important contacts had been severed.* Berlin's interpretation was simple: a pro-British Government had been abolished and a national Government formed in Egypt by a party which had often come out against Great Britain. Auswärtiges Amt clung to its position of not attacking Nahhas-pasha even after the Stefani agency communiqué had been published. This was expressed in German press reports on the Egyptian events.³³

Both before and after the British coup in Egypt, the German press published news and articles favourably disposed to the Wafd. The headline in the Frankfurter Zeitung on the change of Government was typical: 'Egypt Wants Self Determination. Behind the Scenes of the Government Change.'34

On February 12th the director of Count Ciano's bureau communicated to the German Ambassador, von Mackensen, that the news in the Italian press on the Egyptian events was based on reports from reliable sources, filed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ciano's underling, Marquis d'Ajeta, requested that the Germans use the material.³⁵ But the German press clung to its previous line. In a conversation with Prince von Bismarck on February 15th d'Ajeta accused the Germans of refusing to publish the Italian material. He submitted three despatches to Bismarck, apprehended and deciphered by the Italians: the despatch of the Turkish envoy at Cairo to the Ankara Foreign Ministry of February 3rd, the personal despatch of King Farouk to the Egyptian envoy at Washington of February 6th, and the cable of the American military attaché at Cairo, Colonel B. F. Fellers, to the War Department, of February 7th, 1942.³⁶

Italy was evidently very much concerned that Germany should adopt a position similar to hers on the Egyptian events, and that Berlin should come out against the Wafd. When Germany failed to do so, despite the request to Mackensen, the Italians complained of the refusal to publish the materials exposing the Wafd despite its well-known enmity to the Axis. True, the German Government did finally consider the Italian position, but they nevertheless continued to seek contacts with the Wafd.³⁷ And in the political directives communicated on June 26th by von Weizsäcker to von Neurath, jun.—Auswärtiges Amt representative on Rommel's staff—Germany's attitude to the Wafd was formulated very cautiously.³⁸

* See Melchers' notes, Berlin, February 9th, 1942—266/173661-3. In the note of February 5th (266/173658-60) Melchers very cautiously evaluated the establishment of the Wafd Government: 'The conclusion should not be drawn from this fact', he wrote, 'that the road was opened to the formation of a Government favouring the Axis. Wafd politicians have also shown that they are fully inclined under certain conditions to co-operate with England.' But this view was not necessarily shared by the German leaders.

It is just possible that the above incident contributed to the Allies finally discovering that the Axis was able to decipher the American code in which the situation, quantity, strength and movements of the British troops were reported from Cairo. The papers of Colonel Fellers somehow got into the hands of the underground Communist cells in Berlin, which on June 27th, 1942, smuggled in a broadcast on Reichssender Berlin entitled 'Behind the Scenes of World Politics'. The sensational content of this broadcast was the struggle of the espionage centres in the Middle East. The action took place in Cairo and the dialogue carried verbatim citations from Fellers's reports to the Pentagon. The code was changed two days later and Fellers was dismissed.*

The behaviour of the Italians, who in their intervention with the Reich Embassy decided to reveal in extenso the secret documents of their intelligence, is explicable by their great sensitivity on African matters. The impact on public opinion of the loss of Abyssinia and the defeats in North Africa is well known. Because he wanted to retain that area as his exclusive sphere of influence Mussolini for a long time opposed the participation of Reich troops in the African fighting. When in 1942 German forces began to play an increasingly greater role on the African front Italian anxiety grew more and more justified. Berlin's reluctance to take a position against the Wafd and Nahhas-pasha therefore seemed suspicious to the Italians and aroused the fear that Hitler might have his own political designs for Egypt. The constant friction between German and Italian soldiers of various ranks, the belittling of Italy's war role, Rommel's brutal attitude to Italian officers, the scoffing at the valour of Italian soldiers—all this undoubtedly irritated the Italian leaders and created an atmosphere breeding lack of confidence and all sorts of suspicions.

THE GERMANS AND EGYPT

The Germans nevertheless displayed great restraint in everything relating to Egypt. Hitler emphasised many times in his statements that Egypt and Suez should go to Italy.† It was agreed on this basis that Rome would be the centre of propaganda destined for Egypt and the Arab lands generally. And German officials considered Italy's demands in their political directives. Thus, for instance,

^{*} J. Eppler, Rommel ruft Kairo (Rommel Calls Cairo) op. cit., maintains, however (p. 48), that the Abwehr was in possession of the American code from July 1941 on. The suggestion that the broadcast was the job of Soviet intelligence (ibid., 294) seems to be mistaken, because of the manner of presenting the material.

[†] These statements were made, however, before fairly large audiences.

Ribbentrop's directive regarding radio propaganda beamed to Egypt³⁹ called for strong anti-British material and emphasis on the role of Rommel and his army. But it simply disregarded the question of Egyptian independence. Weizsäcker's directives to von Neurath, jun.,⁴⁰ were also very cautiously formulated. He wrote that in Egypt the Germans could first of all count on the King, who had a significant role to play in the further shaping of the situation in that country. It is also known⁴¹ that Hitler gave Auswärtiges Amt special instructions to establish contacts with Farouk and to prevent him from being kidnapped out of Egypt in the event of a British defeat.

On Germany's attitude to the Wafd Weizsäcker's directive was similarly restrained, but not entirely in accordance with Italy's position. Hitler's State Secretary declared that Nahhas-pasha and the Wafd party were in opposition to orthodox circles and to the court, and he pointed to the hostility between the Wafd and Italy. He further stated that the Wafd, although nationalist, had to take into consideration Britain's power in Egypt. While the fight was on, continued Weizsäcker, it would be more prudent for us to reckon on the Egyptian army and political forces remaining passive. Weizsäcker stressed that Germany did not attack Nahhas-pasha in her propaganda. The directive therefore seems to have called for reckoning with Italy's current position, but without in any way impairing Germany's future freedom of action.

At that time, though, the Italian position had to prevail—at least externally. The Germans even agreed to use V. Gayda's articles in *Voce d'Italia*⁴² in their propaganda leaflets and radio broadcasts. It is interesting to note that Italian leaflets dropped over Egypt at that time carried the slogan 'The Mediterranean Sea for the Mediterranean Peoples', and the propaganda articles of Virginio Gayda bore the slogan 'Egypt for the Egyptians', ⁴³ side by side with catchwords about the 2,000-year-old friendship between Italy and Egypt.

The Nazi leaders accepted without reservation Mussolini's draft of an Axis declaration on Egypt. It was shown to the Germans on July 2nd with a request for the most rapid opinion possible, and it was published the next day without any changes.⁴⁴

At the time when their victorious armed forces are marching forward across Egypt, the Axis states reaffirm their decided intention to respect and ensure the independence and sovereignty of Egypt. The armed forces of the Axis are entering Egypt not as into an enemy land, but for the purpose of expelling the English from Egyptian territory and in order to continue military operations against England and to liberate the Near East from British rule.

The policies of the Axis powers are guided by the principle: Egypt for the Egyptians.

The destiny of Egypt, liberated from the fetters shackling her to Great Britain, for which cause the country has felt the painful effects of war, is to take its place among the independent and sovereign nations.⁴⁵

The declaration expressed the Italian viewpoint. It did not contain the formula 'complete independence and full sovereignty' which was used in the letter on Iraq presented to el-Kilani.* The declaration also lacked any reference to general Arab aspirations or to the principal demand of the nationalists and the King at that time: unification of Egypt and the Sudan. It is significant that Ribbentrop's directives for German propaganda in Egypt did consider the all-Arab demands.

Germany's concessions to the Italian viewpoint ended when it came to settling concrete questions. First of all, the Germans attempted their own contacts in Egypt. As indicated above, these were with Aziz Ali el-Masri and the conspiratorial group of nationalist army officers. But it appears that these relations were terminated after el-Masri's attempt to flee from Egypt in 1941 had failed.

The parachuting over the Nile in 1942 of two agents with radio transmitters, who were to contact the anti-British conspiracy in Egypt, brought no results.†

As Rommel's troops advanced in the Western Desert, Berlin tried to renew contact with the King. This was not easy, and German agents spent at least the whole of June investigating how to submit to the King a statement from Hitler and Ribbentrop.⁴⁶ It was to warn Farouk against English intrigues and to contain a proposal on aiding him to flee from Egypt to Rommel's headquarters or to Crete. They wanted to establish a method of holding consultations with the King and proposed to use the radio broadcasts to Egypt for that purpose. It is significant that this whole affair was meant to, and actually did, transpire in secret from the Italians.⁴⁷ Hajj Amin el-Huseini and the Vice-President of the Egyptian 'Green Shirts' (Misr el-Fatat), Dr. Mustafa el-Wakil, co-operated with the Germans in this action.

On June 30th, Dr. Mustafa el-Wakil, with a passport in the name of the Auswärtiges Amt courier Kurt Hoffmann, the agent Schreiner and the former German envoy to Teheran, Ettel, flew from Berlin

* But in their propaganda to Egypt the Italians did issue the slogan 'The Axis fights for the full independence, political freedom and sovereignty of Egypt'.

† The following sources deal with this affair: Eppler, Rommel Ruft Kairo (Rommel Calls Cairo), op. cit., and von Steffen, Salaam, Geheimkommando zum Nil 1942 (Salaam, Secret Commando on the Nile 1942), Neckargemünde, 1960. Eppler was one of the two agents and von Steffen participated in organising the affair. Anwar es-Sadat mentions in his Revolt on the Nile his contact with these Abwehr agents.

to Sofia and from there proceeded by train to Istanbul, where they arrived on July 2nd. On the advice of the Mufti's brother-in-law, Ishaq Derwish, they contacted the Egyptian consul, Amin Zaki-bey. With the help of a letter of recommendation from the British Embassy, Amin Zaki-bey got a plane reservation on the Adana-Cairo line on July 5th, 1942. On the 9th a signal, that had been agreed upon, came to Istanbul that the King had received the message. On July 10th Berlin radio transmission to Egypt began to send the signals agreed upon in the message. Ettel and Dr. Wakil returned to Berlin on July 11th.* Ettel made another trip to Istanbul on July 23rd, when Amin Zaki returned from Cairo with a verbal reply from Farouk. He thanked Hitler for the letter of the previous year and for the Axis declaration on Egypt. But he did not agree to leave the country. Farouk intended to go into hiding at the most dangerous time—of which he was to be informed by the Germans—and thus prevent the English from carrying him off.48

At the same time an Egyptian air-force officer, Ahmed Saudi Husein, on July 6th flew from Egypt to Rommel's headquarters, but was shot down and killed by German anti-aircraft artillery. ⁴⁹ A similar flight was undertaken the next day by an air-force N.C.O., Muhammed Radwan, who succeeded in breaking through British and German anti-aircraft fire. He was brought to Berlin on July 20th. ⁵⁰ But according to Wilhelmstrasse documents he brought no important military information. ⁵¹

Radwan told the Germans that he was a member of a secret political organization operating in Egypt through a network of secret five-man cells. In his remarks on the political situation in Egypt', reported an Auswärtiges Amt official,† 'Radwan pointed to the strong need to provide the peasants and workers with a means of expression. He was very brusque about King Farouk, whom he defined as a "Turk" whose primary interest is not in the welfare of the country but in self-enrichment. Nor can the Wafd party and the old-school politicians save the country where a new military order must first of all be established.' The notes on the conversation indicate that their author did not agree with Radwan's views.⁵² But this is not surprising, since Germany's general orientation was to cooperate with Farouk and the ruling groups of the time.

Some of Radwan's statements, as recorded by German officials,

^{*} According to Ettel's report, Berlin, July 12th—1446/364869-77. It is interesting that in the conversation with Ettel on July 2nd, 1942, Amin Zaki expanded on the question of the Sudan and the Italian guarantees of the Lake Tana waters, and expressed his deep distrust of Italy.

[†] We cite this extended fragment of the note, since it may shed light on the views of the Egyptian 'Free Officers' at the time.

and the later testimony of Egyptian 'Free Officers' (published after their successful coup d'état of July 23rd, 1952) point to the two pilots as emissaries of the officers' conspiracy. Anwar es-Sadat maintains that the Free Officers were in direct touch with the German Command in Libya and that they acted in full agreement with Rommel's head-quarters. The available evidence, however, indicates the breaking-off of contacts after the abortive flight of Aziz Ali el-Masri, at least to the total lack of any liaison in the summer of 1942. It is known that by the beginning of August Radwan was again transferred to Africa to help the Afrika Korps by his knowledge of the terrain and the people and to act as an interpreter. But nothing is known of the establishment of contacts between the officers' conspiracy and the Germans.

The picture would be incomplete, however, without an additional bit of evidence. Upon his return from Cairo, Amin Zaki-bey conveyed Farouk's oral message to Ettel and also informed him that the day after receiving the German communiqué the King had ordered two trustworthy pilots (an officer and an N.C.O.) to fly secretly to Rommel with important maps and plans.⁵⁵ If the pilot officer reached the German lines, the Reich radio was to broadcast the Koran sura 'Al-Ikhlas' (sura 112); if the N.C.O. succeeded, the sura 'Al-Falaq' (sura 113) was to be beamed. It is rather significant that the Germans did not get any maps or plans. The gravity of the German doubts is understandable. But the al-Falaq broadcast was made on August 13th after several delays.⁵⁶

It is highly improbable that the King had in mind anyone other than those pilots. The question remains: Did he really send those pilots? Or was it a ruse to obtain information from the Germans about persons who might be inimical after he found out about the flights?

THE QUESTION OF AN OCCUPATION RÉGIME

Much more important questions now came to the fore in connection with the preparations for the occupation of Egypt. And the Germans made no concessions to Italy here either.*

Berlin did not initiate discussions with Italy on what would be their mutual relationship if and when Egypt were occupied, since there was no compulsion for them to do so. The Germans were in a strong position in North Africa, as they had their troops there and Field-Marshal Rommel was Commander-in-Chief of the campaign to

^{*}Some writers thought incorrectly that the Italo-German difficulties and differences in that period caused Rommel to hold back the offensive. (See H. Cambon, *Histoire de la régence de Tunis*, Paris, 1948, p. 277.)

conquer Egypt. True, he was supposed to be subordinate to the Italian North Africa command, headed by Marshal Bastico. But that was in great measure just a formality even though the Italian command controlled the finances of the North Africa troops. Under the prevailing circumstances, the Germans were sure to wield great authority and enjoy considerable freedom of action in an occupied Egypt, although it was meant to be in Italy's sphere of influence. Italy was to take charge of the civil administration, which could prove very burdensome for the occupant, since feeding the population and keeping the economy of the country going required first of all the large-scale imports of foodstuffs, fuel and raw materials.

The Italians finally became aware of their difficult situation. Mussolini and Ciano formulated a proposition on the question of an occupation régime for Egypt⁵⁷ (on July 2nd). Considering that Mussolini had for some time been expecting the victorious end of the fighting daily, his proposition was pretty late in coming. He suggested that Rommel should head the occupation army, but he was to continue to be subordinate to the Italian North Africa command. The Civil Government was to be in the hands of an Italian Delegato Politico. Ciano's candidate for the post was Count Serafino Mazzolini, Italy's recent envoy to Egypt, who was to get a German Ufficio de Collegamento to assure liaison with the occupation army command.

At first the Germans reacted negatively to the proposals. Hitler agreed to Rommel being Commander-in-Chief of the army of occupation, but he refused to make a decision on the proposed Italian political delegate and the German representative, stating that it was not an urgent question.58 But under Italian pressure59 the Nazi chiefs finally agreed to an Italian Delegato Politico. 'The matter of a German civil representative', Ribbentrop told the Italians, 'is not an urgent question at present. We are perfectly willing to wait for the further development of the military and political situation in Egypt.'60 Rome was highly satisfied with Berlin's agreement on an Italian political delegate.* After assuming his function Rommel was to appoint von Neurath, jun., as chief liaison man, but the Germans did not mention this fact to the Italian Government. 61 Hence, in accordance with Hitler's view, Rommel was to be the only fully authorised German representative in Egypt. 62 The significance of this lies in the fact that problems between Germany and Italy would then be solved at a military level, where the Germans clearly commanded superiority, and not on the political level, where it was necessary to consider Italy's primacy in Egypt and the whole Arab world. At any rate, that decision is evidence of the fact that the

^{*} It made the Duce happy, Ciano told Mackensen (Mackensen's despatch, Rome, July 8th, 1942—266/173726).

Germans did not want to get involved or take responsibility for matters not connected with war operations as long as the fighting was on. It shows, too, that they wanted a clear record in Egypt so that they could settle matters their way when the time came—after victory in the war.

ECONOMIC QUESTIONS

The above tendency was even more clearly expressed when it became necessary to agree on economic measures to be taken during the expected occupation of Egypt. The Italians felt very strongly about these matters, because they anticipated rich spoils and because of their experience with their occupation of Greece, where hunger reigned as a result of the economic plundering, and the impossibility of importing anything. Rome wanted to avoid a similar situation in Egypt out of fear of repercussions in the whole Arab world, 63 where its prestige was anyway quite low.* A model régime will have to be created in Egypt, 64 the Marquis d'Ajeta told Mackensen, since the situation there will influence the attitude of the whole Arab world.

On the evening of July 4th the Italian Embassy at Berlin submitted to Auswärtiges Amt Mussolini's proposals on economic questions. 65 The Duce of Fascism called attention to the fact that Egypt was not an enemy country but a neutral one where an Egyptian Government should function despite the occupation. It was only necessary to eliminate the higher British officials from many institutions and Government bodies. Like the German authorities, Mussolini was probably informed that Ali Maher-pasha was preparing to form a Cabinet by agreement with the monarch and support of the other pro-Axis elements. 66 The Duce insisted that it must under no circumstances be allowed to come 'to the mass buying-up or hoarding of goods' which would undermine the Egyptian economy. There is no purpose, he pointed out, in alienating the inhabitants. What is most important, the Italian Government was not in a position to carry the burden of provisioning and maintaining the population, which then amounted to some 16 million.

On the basis of the above, Rome proposed that: (a) the Italian Government should exercise control over military expenditures in Egypt, (b) the Axis military authorities should make no purchases and should not requisition any goods beyond the needs of the troops stationed there, (c) a special German-Italian organisation should be set up to occupy itself with 'purchases' in Egypt.

The Germans were evasive on these propositions. Nazi officials

* The Egyptians more than once stressed their preference for England if faced with a choice between her and Italy. El-Kilani said the same to Woermann (Woermann's notes, Berlin, July 20th, 1942—83/61461–2).

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directed the Italians to Rommel, stating that these matters were in his jurisdiction and that he had the responsible people to handle them. But they rejected outright the idea of a new organisation and in line with Ribbentrop's instructions played a delaying game with the settlement of this question.

An organisation was set up by the Italians on July 3rd, 1943, the Cassa Mediterranea di Credito par l'Egitto, in order to control military expenditure. Its coupons were to be obligatory until the future arrangement of currency emission by the Bank of Egypt. The exchange rate of these coupons was set at 72.5 lire per Egyptian pound (roughly equivalent to the pound sterling) and 9.5 marks per pound. The German military were to receive these coupons after producing an itemised list of expenditure.

Owing to Italian insistence, the Germans agreed to the operation of the Cassa Mediterranea, but they demanded that coupons should be supplied to the German troops in the amounts requested and without their having to show the purpose for which they were intended. They also agreed to limit the military's authority to making purchases and requisitions. But they proposed that the first units to reach certain objectives should secure the wealth they found, and its division should be determined later by the two Governments. The idea of a joint German-Italian Commission was definitely rejected by the Germans, who suggested that the matter of purchases in Egypt should be discussed at some later point.⁶⁷

It is clear that this was essentially a negative reply, although they agreed to the operation of the Italian Cassa Mediterranea. The German demand for unlimited credits and rejection of all control could easily lead to inflation, in a country for which Italy carried the responsibility, and to overburdening the Italian treasury. 'To secure the wealth' was to be mainly the job of German units, since they had superior mobility and would reach objectives sooner than the Italians. Rome had cause to suspect that its partner would make good use of that fact. The proposal for a joint German-Italian Commission did not meet Berlin's approval because the Germans preferred unlimited possibilities to plunder and had no desire to take responsibility for the Egyptian economy.

Negotiations were going on in Rome at that time on the question of war loot, which was a bone of contention between the two Axis partners, and not only on a Government level, but between the officers and men of the two countries in North Africa. ⁶⁸ The Italians proposed that the booty on the Eastern Front should go to Germany and that in Egypt to Italy. When presented with this problem Hitler stated that in principle war spoils should belong to those who take them. ⁶⁹ On the whole, the German Command opposed Italy's

demands, particularly Rommel, who complained about Rome's financial control and wanted to eliminate it in Egypt.⁷⁰ This control was based on the Italo-German understanding of March 14th, 1942, regarding the mutual consignments of supplies for the troops. The Italians maintained that by agreeing to apply that understanding to the Italian troops in Russia they expected it to be obligatory for German troops in Egypt.⁷¹ But the Germans insisted that that agreement should not apply to Egypt.⁷²

The Italians clung to their positions, referring to Mussolini's directive to safeguard Egypt from the hunger and economic ruin to which Greece was reduced. 73 A few weeks later they again stressed that they maintained the position of July 4th. In a note on August 4th the Italian Ambassador at Berlin demanded application of the March 14th agreement in Egypt and of the earlier understanding among the military commands on the securing of wealth; and he asked for the creation of a joint purchasing commission. He proposed that Clodius and Giannini should discuss these matters at a conference on the island of Brioni.74 These discussions at the end of August yielded no results. Italy only agreed verbally that the March 14th understanding would not be applied in Egypt. But German experts acknowledged that realisation of this promise would meet with difficulties. 75 In his report on this conversation Clodius wrote that the Italian delegation was 'deeply hurt' by Germany's behaviour. And the Rome Embassy cabled that Giannini, head of the Italian delegation, had returned from Brioni in 'very bad humour' because of the German attitude to the question of Egypt, and that he expressed the fear that Berlin had some intentions towards Egypt which prevented a frank discussion on its part. 76

The Marquis d'Ajeta then told Bismarck outright that Germany's attitude made her recognition of Italian primacy in Egypt an empty phrase.⁷⁷

After the failure of these conversations the Rome government—for whom the question of Egypt was of first-rate importance—again returned to the economic questions connected with the anticipated occupation. Dino Alfieri, the Italian Ambassador in Berlin, turned to Weizsäcker on September 16th with a request to renew conversations on Mussolini's proposals. The Duce, stressed Alfieri, attached great importance to these questions.⁷⁸ Ribbentrop then presented Italy's propositions to Hitler,⁷⁹ who opposed the formation of a joint Italo-German commission, which was the heart of Mussolini's propositions.* The German authorities finally agreed to limit requisitions in

^{* &#}x27;You can't expect an understanding without accepting the commission proposed by them [the Italians]', wrote Wiehl in his notes of September 5th, 1942—266/173769-70.

Egypt to the minimum needed to provision the troops,80 and they adjusted with the Italians the method of financing the German army in Egypt.81 Besides that, the Italians again had to be satisfied with having their prestige soothed, for which purpose the Germans made the following declaration: 'In agreement with the principle that Italy is entitled to political primacy in Egypt, the Reich Government leaves the shaping of economic relations in Egypt to the Italian Government'.82 Greedy for triumphs of prestige and disturbed by the behaviour of the German representatives at the negotiations, the Mussolini régime expressed satisfaction with the statement.83 The Germans could not refuse agreement on Italy's proposal on finances, because they thought it necessary to settle such questions before large-scale fighting developed on the Egyptian front.84 But another agreement was also signed on October 20th to the effect that the March 14th, 1942, document did not apply to Egypt. 85 In the final account Germany undertook no obligations whatever towards Egypt's economy.

These Italo-German negotiations, and, by analogy, the situation in the occupied countries of Europe, provide some notion of what Egypt would have been like if it had been conquered by the Axis.

THE AXIS ROUT IN EGYPT

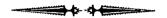
It cannot be maintained that the above agreement put an end to the Italo-German dispute over Egypt. It was really ended by the turn in the fortunes of war. Apprehensive of the growing power of his opponents, Rommel resumed the offensive on August 30th. But he could not rely this time on his army's superior weapons, since most German convoys to North Africa had been sunk. The armoured and motorised columns, in particular, felt the painful lack of fuel. The decision not to invade Malta now had its repercussions. The Alam el-Halfa battle brought the Axis no advantage. The offensive came to a standstill and could not get off the ground again because Montgomery attacked at el-Alamein on October 23rd with the Eighth Army. The decisive battle of November 1st and 2nd resulted in the destruction of the Afrika Korps and 450 of the 600 Axis tanks. The Axis army lost 10,000 in dead, 15,000 wounded and 30,000 prisoners. On November 8th the Allied forces carried out operation 'Torch' at the opposite end of Africa and started a march from west to east. It was the beginning of the end for the Axis in Africa. It now became totally unnecessary to evacuate Egypt, for which the British troops and institutions had been preparing since the summer of 1942. The Royal Palace also ceased preparations, as did the Muslim clergy, headed by the Sheikh el-Azhar, to greet Rommel (according to the

Egyptian envoy at Ankara) with more pomp than once welcomed Napoleon.⁸⁶

As is known, the German defeat in Africa was not an isolated phenomenon. On the Eastern Front the battle of the Volga had been raging since the middle of September. The Germans were not able to overcome the resistance of the Soviet Army and their offensive was stopped. The strong Soviet resistance and the concentration of the Reich's forces at Stalingrad resulted in the German offensive in the Caucasus coming to a dead halt, after taking Novorossiisk (September 10th, 1942). On November 19th the Soviet Army launched a counter-offensive on the Volga. This meant that the Axis lost the initiative both on the Eastern and North African Fronts. The initiative this time passed definitely to the anti-Fascist coalition.

XIII

THE ARAB LEGION AND MUFTI-KILANI DISPUTE



E discussed above the efforts of both Arab leaders to obtain declarations from the Axis supporting Arab demands. However, at that time the Germans, especially the military, engaged in an entirely different kind of activity in Arab affairs.

DEUTSCH-ARABISCHE LEHRABTEILUNG

Let us recall at this point that the would-be military mission to Iraq, headed by General Helmuth Felmy, was not dissolved but transferred to Cape Sunion near Athens, as Sonderstab F. Its commander, General Felmy, had served under the Kaiser as an ensign in the 61st Infantry Regiment at Toruń, and had been connected with the German air force since 1912. After uninterrupted military service under the Kaiser, the Republic and the Nazi dictatorship, he was made a general in 1939. It could have been expected that his military career would come to an end on January 12th, 1940, when he was held responsible for the forced landing in a neutral country of a paratroop liaison officer who carried secret documents on his person despite orders, but his period of inactivity did not last long. He was restored to active service on May 12th, 1941, because of his flying experience which had been acquired on the Sinai Peninsula in World War I. He was given command of a military mission which it was planned to send to Iraq. In mid-June 1941 H. Felmy became Commander-in-Chief of the German troops in Southern Greece. This was in principle an Italian occupation zone, but it had enclaves under German control. Crete, too, fell under his command. General Felmy's activity brought him, after the war, before an American war court, as one of the accused in the so-called Balkan trial.1

In July 1941 Sonderstab F created a small training group which it was planned to use later in the Syrian Desert. It was composed of

Arabs who had been studying in Germany and a small number of volunteers transported to Cape Sunion from Syria after the collapse of General Dentz's army. About 300 of Fawzi el-Qawuqji's and Aref Abd er-Razeq's men, with the aid of Sonderstab F, escaped from Syria to Turkey, but they did not succeed in getting to Greece. By the end of 1941 Sonderstab F had trained twenty-five to thirty Arabs.² It seems that Berlin did not inform the Italians of that particular activity.

Such was the state of affairs when Hajj Amin el-Huseini and Rashid Ali el-Kilani arrived in Europe. These Arab leaders, of course, preferred that the Arabs in the Axis armies should serve in separate units under their national colours, and they proposed the formation of an Arab Legion. Such a Legion would be of great propaganda importance³ and could play a significant role if the Axis military forces operated in Arab lands.

The proposal for a Legion was advanced by the Mufti of Jerusalem in conversations with Mussolini and Ciano during his first visit to Rome (October-November, 1941),⁴ He presented this idea also to Weizsäcker, Ribbentrop and Hitler in Berlin.⁵ The question of an Arab Legion was considered by Auswärtiges Amt in December 1941⁶ and an announcement came from Hitler's headquarters that the Führer desired the immediate formation of such a Legion.⁷ He evidently had in mind the substantial expansion of Arab units on Cape Sunion. At the same time, during the visit to Germany of Subhas Chandra Bose plans were laid to form an Indian Legion.

By the end of 1941 Sonderstab F had contacted the two Arab leaders in an attempt to establish a basis of co-operation between them and the German Military Command. Hajj Amin and Rashid Ali called for an official military agreement, a draft of which was discussed in January 1942. But it did not result in an official agreement, since Germany did not want any political complications with Italy on these grounds. Despite this, both leaders promised their cooperation. Through both persuasion and application of the necessary pressure they hoped to get the Arabs living in Germany and in the occupied countries to join the Deutsch-Arabische Lehrabteilung (German-Arab Training Detachment—DAL). In this respect the Mufti was in a better position than el-Kilani, for there were no Iraqi soldiers on the war front or in prison camps, as was the case with Arab soldiers of Palestinian units. El-Kilani therefore sent very few volunteers to Cape Sunion, and some of them claimed after their arrival that they only wanted to study in Germany and had no wish to be soldiers. The Mufti, on the other hand, in co-operation with the OKW, mustered one company of ex-prisoners of war. These together with the Arab non-commissioned officers trained by

Sonderstab F remained the only Arab unit until 1942.8 It contained about 130 men in May of that year.9

The chief reason for this state of affairs must be sought in German and Italian Arab policy, since the Axis rejected every thought of mobilising the Arabs from the Italian and French colonies, against the Mufti's wishes, who proposed to enlist captured Arabs, Algerians, Tunisians and Moroccans. Thus, the Under-secretary of State, Woermann, wrote in a memorandum¹⁰ on the question of enlisting Arab units: 'In our Arab policy we always distinguish between Near East and North African Arabs. Our Arab policy does not apply to the area west of Egypt. We are not interested in cultivating nationalism in North Africa because of our policy toward Italy, France and Spain.' Since North African Arabs were not involved, it was possible to attract only Arab prisoners, mainly Palestinians, refugees from Iraq or Syria, and Arab students who, with the outbreak of war, had remained in Europe. By the end of the war there were about 9,000 Arabs in Palestinian units of the British Army. There were therefore, at most, several hundred men available in 1942 for service in the Axis' Arab formations.

Hajj Amin el-Huseini and Rashid Ali were dissatisfied with the fact that the group stationed at Cape Sunion was a German-Arab training outfit and not one designated as an Arab national unit. They ostentatiously called it al-mufraza al-arabiyya al-hurra, i.e. The Arab Freedom Corps. In the meantime an ever-increasing rivalry emerged between the two leaders. Such was the situation when the Mufti again proposed to Italy the formation of an Arab Legion. This was on the occasion of his trip from Berlin to Rome, together with el-Kilani (February 1942). In theory the Italian Government took a positive attitude to the proposition, but practice showed that it did not intend to implement its position. The Italians acknowledged that it was a useful project, but denied it any military significance.¹¹ This position can be explained by the fact that Libya or her immediate neighbours would be the territory where such a Legion would operate, and Rome clearly feared that contact with an Arab Legion would demoralise the people in the Italian colonies, while it was disturbed at the same time that it was the Germans not the Italians who were forming Arab units.12 The Mufti evidently knew how to use this rivalry, and he got an agreement in Italy for the formation of an Arab Legion, to fight under Arab colours. 13 This question was put by the Mufti to Mussolini* on May 7th and the

^{*} The Mufti concealed this meeting with Mussolini from the Germans and el-Kilani. See Woermann's notes (Berlin, May 22nd, 1942—86/62030); Mackensen's despatch (Rome, June 5th, 1942—71/51142); Woermann's notes of June 8th and September 15th, 1942 (71/51143 and 71/51209–11).

formation of an Arab Legion in Italy began about the same time.*

When negotiations were resumed between Sonderstab F, el-Huseini and el-Kilani early in May 1942 on the question of expanding the DAL, both Arabs were unvielding. Sonderstab F considered that a number of political questions had to be settled with the Arab leaders, such as, for instance, the problems of the command, the Arab national insignia, the text of oaths, etc. But the Arab leaders again raised the question of a military pact and demanded that DAL should be recognised as a separate, purely Arab unit under Arab command. They also made it clear that they would not take part in the project unless their demands were met. They were finally promised that the unit formed at Cape Sunion would serve as a basis for the formation of other detachments, and that the moment such units crossed into Arab territory they would serve as Arab and not German detachments.¹⁴ After this assurance both Arab leaders promised further collaboration—but with the proviso that they were waiting for a military agreement. Still, it turned out that this exchange of opinion did not solve the problem. New difficulties continued to arise in the relations between the Arab leaders and Sonderstab F. And the conflict which clearly emerged between the Mufti and Rashid Ali further aggravated the situation.

DISPUTES OVER THE ARAB LEGION

Behind the difficulties was the controversy between the Axis partners on the question of Arab military units.

The Germans promised not to form an Arab Legion¹⁵ and both military commands agreed that such a Legion with Arab officers and under an Arab flag would appear only in Italy and that the Arab war prisoners held in Germany (about 250) would be turned over to the Italians.¹⁶

The action of Sonderstab F therefore aroused Italy's apprehension and caused her constantly to intervene.¹⁷ Rome invoked its priority in Arab affairs and asserted that Italy should create an Arab Legion and Germany an Indian one. It reminded the Germans of a tacit understanding on these matters among the Axis powers¹⁸ and demanded that all Arab war prisoners and all others fit for military service should be turned over to the Legion.¹⁹ In exchange, the Italians undertook to hand over to the Germans all their Indian prisoners. They accused Grobba, who was looking after the Mufti

* Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Reich Embassy, Rome, May 12th, 1942—86/62834. It follows from the context of the documents in the collection *Die indische und arabische Legion* (The Indian and Arab Legion), that this happened shortly before this fact was communicated to the Germans.

and el-Kilani for Auswärtiges Amt, of trying to influence them to co-operate mainly with Germany and to tie in their plans only with the Reich.²⁰

As suggested by the Italians, the exchange of Indian and Arab war prisoners began at the end of May. It proved a burdensome process and led to constant misunderstandings among the partners.* And it could not be otherwise with two competing undertakings based on very limited human material. Because he wanted to strengthen his Legion in Italy, the Mufti demanded five of 'the few really available Arab second-lieutenants'21 from the first group of Arab non-commissioned officers and second-lieutenants trained at Cape Sunion. But he met with the decided opposition of the German Army Command. At that time Sonderstab F tried, with the knowledge of the Mufti and el-Kilani, to enlist another 100 war prisoners in the DAL. But the Italians intervened in this case, because they wanted those prisoners in exchange for Indians. Sonderstab F was forced to cease recruiting prisoners. A few Iraqi officers living in Italy then made their way secretly to Germany. In reply to her intervention, Italy was told by the German military, with Ribbentrop's agreement, that DAL was a German-Arab unit. And the Italians were reassured that DAL's members would operate within the German forces as regional specialists, 22 as was often the case with soldiers of the OKW special tasks regiment called Brandenburg. It must be added that the results of the Italians' efforts were less than modest. They did not manage to organise an Arab Legion in Italy. Of the Palestinian prisoners turned over by the Germans, only eighteen agreed to serve in the Legion, and of these there finally remained only eight.²³ The main force operating here was the strong aversion the Arabs felt for Italy, because of her well-known colonisation plans.

It was actually planned that DAL, like the Indian Legion, should enter the war as part of the German army operations in the Middle East.²⁴ This was connected with serious political perspectives, for DAL was meant to become the nucleus of an Iraqi Army which the Germans aimed to organise after conquering that country.²⁵ The question of DAL was consequently related to Berlin's operational plan on the southern sector of the Soviet front and directly involved the future division of spheres of influence between the European Axis powers.

Therefore DAL was to play its major role only after the conquest of the Caucasus and the invasion of the Arab countries, specifically Iraq, from the north. The Germans planned a number of political

^{*} A good part of the diplomatic correspondence in the collection *Die indische* und arabische Legion is devoted to these clashes.

measures in preparation for the invasion of Iraq after taking the Caucasus. It was then that DAL was to go into action. When Tbilisi had been occupied Hajj Amin el-Huseini and Rashid Ali el-Kilani were to be stationed there together with 'Dienststelle Grobba', organised by Auswärtiges Amt to co-ordinate Arab activity. An Iraqi Government was to be proclaimed there headed by Rashid Ali. A manifesto was to be issued in Tbilisi on the Axis' aims for the Arab world. After the conquest of Iraq the members of 'Dienststelle Grobba' were to become the personnel of the German Legation at Baghdad, and the members of Sonderstab F were to become inspectors of the Iraqi Army.²⁶

It is clear that Iraq did not in any way figure as part of the Italian sphere of influence in these plans. She was to be occupied by German troops, commanded by Germans, in fact as well as formally. It was a different case in North Africa, where many Italian units operated alongside the Deutsche Afrika Korps and Rommel was formally subordinate to the Italian High Command. It was the Germans who intended to organise the Iraqi Army, and this meant German hegemony owing to the exceptional role the army had and continued to play in that country. Under these circumstances, 'Dienststelle Grobba' was meant to be a residence rather than a legation.

As documents show, the Wilhelmstrasse openly questioned Italy's future influence in Iraq.27 German officials tended to refrain from directly formulating their doubts about the future of Rome's position in other Arab countries. It goes without saying that the leaders of the Third Reich did not share with Rome their doubts as to whether Iraq belonged to the Mediterranean area which Hitler recognised as Italy's living space.²⁸ 'A frank exchange of opinion' on this matter was to take place at 'an appropriate time', i.e. when German troops would be on the spot. There is therefore nothing strange in the fact that the documents relating to the Arab countries contain not a trace of Hitler's promise to Ciano that all territory south of the Caucasus would constitute Italy's sphere of influence. Iran was treated as an incontrovertible German sphere of influence,29 and as for Iraq—it was acknowledged that it might perhaps be necessary to allow the Italians to participate in solving some questions there, such as the matter of oil, for instance.30

Moreover, in the summer of 1942 the Germans started the formation of another Arab company at Cape Sunion, this time of North African Arabs.³¹

CONTROVERSY ON USING DAL

In the summer of 1942 the situation was as follows: on the North African front the Axis troops stood at the gates of Egypt, and on the

Soviet front they were approaching the Caucasus. The time had arrived for intensive work among the Arabs and for the utilisation of Arab units formed by Germany and Italy. But here there came to the surface a hidden clash between the two partners. And a violent rivalry between the two main Arab leaders emerged against that background.

The Mufti and Rashid Ali were again invited to Rome in connection with the Egypt offensive. Hajj Amin gladly accepted the invitation. Rashid Ali had some misgivings at first, but finally also went.32 El-Kilani's reluctance was due to his attitude on working with the Italians, and reflected the general Arab dislike for Italian imperialism. Rashid Ali's aversion was intensified by the relations between the Mufti and Rome. Rashid Ali soon began openly to express his conviction that Italy's priority in Arab matters recognised by the German Government was disadvantageous and dangerous to the Arabs. He held the opinion that the Arabs should place all their hopes on a German victory on the Eastern Front and on the eventual march of Hitler's troops from the Caucasus to Iraq, and not on Axis successes in North Africa.33 There are grounds for assuming that Dr. Grobba confirmed el-Kilani in these views. This may be why he attracted the attacks of the Italian Government³⁴ and of the Mufti of Jerusalem.35 Grobba evidently expressed in a somewhat sharp and rather too open manner the secret intentions of influential German political and economic circles. It may be recalled that it was Hitler who expressed to Ciano (on October 26th, 1941) the idea of using the Caucasus with its oilfields as a springboard for a thrust into the Arab countries.

The Mufti offered his services to Italy in the offensive on Egypt and expressed a wish to go to North Africa. He wanted to work for the Axis there during the offensive, expecting in this way to gain importance in the Arab world. Reckoning to profit from victories in Egypt, he wanted to attract the mobilised Arabs from Cape Sunion there—against the wishes of the Germans. He brought to Rome, for this purpose, one of the Arab second-lieutenants, then on leave in Berlin. General Felmy feared that the Mufti would try to attract more of the Arabs enlisted in DAL.³⁶ El-Kilani, on the other hand, tried to get back to Berlin. He maintained that Egyptian questions and Italian activity in this field were of little importance, and that the progress of the German troops in the Caucasus required the speeding-up of negotiations on German-Iraqi co-operation.³⁷ He left for Berlin at the end of August.³⁸

Sonderstab F was transferred to the Soviet Union at that time. Reinforced, expanded and supplied with special equipment, it became the 'General-Kommando 68 z.b.V.' (zur besonderen Verwendungfor special tasks). It was subordinate to the First German Armoured Army. Its headquarters were located at Budionovskaya on the Kuma.³⁹ General-Kommando 68 numbered 6,000 men; it was a completely motorised formation and had a reserve of arms for a whole division of Arab volunteers or deserters. It was supplied with seven aeroplanes for liaison, communications and dissemination of leaflets. DAL was moved to Stalino and after the expected conquest of Tbilisi was to proceed to the Caucasus and through Western Iran and Iraq in the direction of Basra.⁴⁰

Although the Mufti did work with some Caucasus and Turkestani Muslim traitors, 41 he presented a memorandum opposing the sending of the Arabs to the Caucasus and demanded they should be shipped to Egypt or North Africa. 42 He addressed a message at the same time to the chief of Italian intelligence, General Amé, outlining plans for his activity in North Africa. 43 The Comando Supremo showed this message to the Germans on September 10th. The Mufti proposed the expansion of propaganda, formation of Arab guerilla detachments and regular units commanded in the Arabic language and using an Arabian flag and special uniform. He further suggested establishing contact with Egyptian organisations and the smuggling of arms behind British lines. At first the German authorities denied the Mufti's right to intervene on how to use DAL. But besides general considerations the attitude of the Arab detachment influenced the German military to negotiate the matter with the Mufti. The conversations took place on September 15th at Rome, with the participation of General Felmy, Colonel Meyer-Ricks, Colonel Lahousen, Admiral Canaris and General Amé. 44 The Mufti promised to send an emissary to Stalino to pacify the DAL Arabs, but he did not change his position on the manner of using DAL.45

El-Kilani followed an entirely different course, definitely supporting Berlin's position. Referring to the argument of the military command that the question of how to use the Deutsch-Arabische Lehrabteilung was for the military to decide, el-Kilani declared his unwillingness to meddle in such matters. He wanted to become the Germans' chief Arab instrument, at least in the sphere of Arab military formations. And he probably signed quite willingly (on September 12th, 1942) the 'agreement with the OKW on the utilisation of the Arab Freedom Corps'. According to this document, Arab units were made subordinate to the German Army, it was not permissible to break them up and their utilisation in one or another Arab country was to be decided by the German Command. Upon arrival at their destination these Arab units were to admit local volunteers on the basis of an agreement with the given country, or if a national army existed there, the Arab Freedom Corps was to be

incorporated in it. The North Africa Arabs mobilised in a special company established on Cape Sunion in the summer of 1942 were recognised in the agreement as members of the German Army. This agreement greatly strained relations between the Mufti and el-Kilani. What is more, it became an instrument of struggle between the two among the Arab immigrants in Europe. The whole clash became very inconvenient for Berlin, probably because Hajj Amin was unofficially supported by Italy.

El-Kilani's views were influenced not only by his dislike of Italian imperialism, but also by his position as an Iraqi leader. If the concept of a march on the Arabian countries from the Caucasus ever materialised, then Iraq would hold the key position in the Arab East. Whereas, with the North African offensive victorious, the Axis would first take Egypt, then Palestine and Syria. In that case those countries would be Berlin's and Rome's centre of interest. and the leading Arab would then be Haji Amin el-Huseini and not el-Kilani. The difference between the Iraqi viewpoint—represented by el-Kilani—and that of Palestine-Syria, whose spokesman was the Mufti, led to the two Arab leaders' completely contrary standpoints on the question of Arab unity. The ex-Mufti of Jerusalem became the principal advocate of Pan-Arabism. His goal was a Great Arab State which embraced Iraq, Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine.⁴⁹ But he did not stop there. With the development of the situation his own ambitions inclined him ever more clearly to the most extremist variant of Pan-Arabism: the dream of a Great Arab State stretching from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf.⁵⁰ El-Kilani, on the other hand, favoured an Arab federation and considered that a final decision on the matter should be postponed to a time when it would be possible to consult the leaders of the individual Arab countries.51

Hajj Amin el-Huseini's extremist Pan-Arabism was perhaps his chief trump in the conflict with el-Kilani among the Arab emigrés. 52

Of course, the Mufti took into account Italy's actual relation to Arab unity and he was aware of her double-faced attitude to the question of Arab independence. But he had been tied to Italy for a long time.⁵³ He soberly evaluated the importance of Italo-German relations during the war and hence favoured closer co-operation with Italy—despite the prevailing Arab opinion.

It is worth turning to the political paradoxes of this situation. The extremist advocate of Pan-Arabism, the Mufti, did not scorn close collaboration with a country, Italy, which was deeply suspicious of all Pan-Arabist plans. Whereas el-Kilani, the Iraqi nationalist who tied all his plans to Germany and not to the Axis, succeeded in influencing Italy to recognise Iraq's claim to Shatt el-Arab and

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Persian Khuzistan. This transpired because the Italians wanted to join an oil-bearing section of Iran to Iraq—since they considered it part of their future sphere of influence. The Germans, however, reacted coldly to that demand.⁵⁴

STRUGGLE FOR LEADERSHIP

Such was the political background of the conflict between the Mufti and el-Kilani. As indicated above, the main content of the clash was a struggle for leadership, for gratification of personal ambition and thirst for power, for first place in the Fascist protectors' grace.⁵⁵

Formally, the situation stood as follows: The above-mentioned letters of Ciano and Ribbentrop containing the Axis rulers' promises on general Arab questions were addressed to both Arab leaders. Both were thus equally recognised as general Arab spokesmen. El-Kilani was also acknowledged as head of the Iraqi state, but Hajj Amin was received by Hitler and for a long time (until the summer of 1942) remained the only Arab with that distinction. Hitler made certain promises during that audience to which the Mufti later referred. According to these promises, Hajj Amin el-Huseini was to get the most important position among the Arabs. True, there was no doubt about the Mufti's personal superiority to el-Kilani in his range of ability, influence and lack of scruple.*

Before leaving for Rome the Mufti had stressed very emphatically the matter of his political authority in all Arab questions, and in particular over el-Kilani, who had begun to act on his own and not always in accordance with Hajj Amin's wishes. El-Kilani's argument was that as Premier of a sovereign country recognised as such by the Axis he could not subordinate himself to Hajj Amin.

But the Mufti was unyielding in his demand for recognition as the supreme leader of the Arabs. He maintained, even during his first contacts with the Axis early in the war, that he spoke in the name of an All-Arab Committee. While in Berlin, back in November 1941, he had presented Grobba with a declaration boasting of his high position in the Arab world.⁵⁷ He then had three long talks with Ettel in June 1942 in which he presented his political views and again raised the questions discussed with Grobba six months before.⁵⁸ He repeated the same to Weizsäcker,⁵⁹ to Woermann⁶⁰ and to Ettel again.⁶¹ With some differences in detail, these were variants of the same story: the Mufti did not agree to make any concessions on the matter of his political authority because all Arab problems had to be decided by

^{*}Such, for instance, was the opinion of Abbas Hilmi about the Mufti—'capable and dangerous'; about el-Kilani—'an honest patriot but of small ability' (Prüfer's notes, Berlin, June 17th, 1943—K879/K221519-25).

the secret organisation Hizb al-Umma al-Arabiyya. According to him, this organisation was constructed on the 'Führer' principle as the successor to al-Fatat, which existed before World War I. The first chief of that organisation was supposed to have been Feisal, King of Iraq, and the leadership was said to consist of people sympathetic to Great Britain. The Mufti claimed that under Feisal the party began to change its direction; it became necessary to bar such people as Nuri Said and in general to win over new people. In another version the Mufti boasted that it was he who lent the organisation an anti-British character when he became its head. Before that he had been a rank-and-file member for many years; then he became chief of its Jerusalem section and later its Palestine leader. He related these events, too, with a few variations: thus, he once maintained that he was chosen leader at the start of the Palestine uprising in 1936. He then claimed that he was appointed chief by the Arab leaders in 1932, or that Feisal assigned him the post in the same year. The Mufti insisted that the Hizb al-Umma al-Arabiyya brought about agreement and concluded the war between the Imam of Yemen and Ibn Saud in 1934 and that it was he who conducted the negotiations. He claimed further that that party was the mainspring of the Iraqi events and that it was he again who convinced Naji Shawkat, Rashid Ali and the four colonels of the need for active struggle. That party, according to him, designated Taha el-Hashimi as Premier, and when it was necessary to replace him he (the Mufti), despite the opinions of the Iraqi members of the organisation, forced the assignment of Rashid Ali, who had joined the organisation on that occasion and was sworn in on his recommendation. According to Hajj Amin, the organisation had branches in all Arab countries including Saudi Arabia and the Yemen. He boasted to Mackensen that in Saudi Arabia the majority of the King's co-workers belonged to the organisation, and that Ibn Saud himself saw the Arabs' future in an alliance with the Axis.* There was never a doubt, insisted the Mufti, that Rashid Ali was his political subordinate. This relation only

changed in Berlin when he began to act on his own.

Some time in the spring of 1942 the Mufti began to blame Grobba for Kilani's insubordination and obstinacy, indicating thereby that his rival was a waverer and of weak character.

^{*} Mackensen's despatch, Berlin, August 7th, 1942—71/51520-1. The occasion of that conversation was probably Ibn Saud's letter to the Mufti in which he explained why he broke off diplomatic relations with the Axis Powers and requested that 'his two friends' (Germany and Italy) be informed that he did so against his will and that he had only the best of intentions towards them. (See Rintelen to Woermann, Feldmark, July 22nd, 1942—71/51181). The fact that Ibn Saud's entourage had a friendly attitude to Germany is confirmed by K. S. Twitchell (Saudi Arabia, Princeton, 1958, p. 166).

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The Mufti exploited in his story certain ideas prevalent in Europe about the Arab countries. He thus made use of the reputation of the secret Arab organisations that operated in the Ottoman empire, a reputation to which the English (particularly Lawrence in his book The Seven Pillars of Wisdom) made their contribution along with the Arab propagandists. He invoked the memory of King Feisal of Iraq, because he was considered in the '20s and early '30s to be the most prominent of Arab leaders. The Mufti further referred to the Western image of Pan-Islam. He boasted of his exalted position in the Muslim world presenting himself as the organiser and head of the Islamic conference held in Jerusalem in 1931. Hajj Amin did not have to convince his auditors of the fact that Pan-Arabist ideas were widespread. All who had any contact with Arab affairs were well aware of that.

The conflict over who would assume the leading position in the Arab East and whom the Axis would recognise as its main instrument soon became very sharp. Mutual denunciations to the German and Italian authorities, intrigues and wrangles among the Arabs living in Europe were continuous and involved various Axis institutions and agencies.*

As the time approached for his trip to North Africa (at the end of July 1942) the Mufti wanted to be recognised as the leader of the secret Arab organisation directing the activity of the Arab nationalist movement. And he wanted to confront the Axis with the need for making a decision, just as he did in his conversation with the Germans in the autumn of 1941. It would be a personal decision this time, but it might seriously affect the question of Arab unity, since he, the Mufti, would become its recognised spokesman. The decision then would not only settle the question of his future—in the event of the distant Axis victory—it would also give him leadership over the Arabs living within the Axis orbit as well as decisive influence over any Arab organisations formed by the Axis. The Mufti in that case would have plenty of funds at his disposal and he would hence exert an influence over the Arab exiles in Turkey† and in general over all who would receive money from him. In the meantime Haji Amin engaged in wide activity among Muslims, made all kinds of contacts and won recognition in the Muslim world far beyond the Arabspeaking areas.

† Many of them regularly received money from the Mufti and el-Kilani, who got it from Germany and Italy (see 83/62017, 83/62004, 83/62051-2).

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^{*} Many reports on the mutual denunciations may be found among Auswärtiges Amt documents. Ciano also noted (under the date line July 26th, 1942): 'Both [the Mufti and Kilani] are wrangling and Grobba . . . pours oil on the fire' (Ciano's Diary, London, 1948).

GERMANY AND ITALY ON THE MUFTI'S AMBITIONS

In line with their waiting policy in Arab matters, the Germans preferred to maintain the *status quo* in the leadership of their Arab supporters and to see what the Italians decided. It would have been convenient for the Germans if the two leaders had come to an understanding, and they counted on the Italians doing something in that direction. ⁶² They consistently clung to the opinion that it was necessary to hold on to both the Mufti and el-Kilani⁶³ and they sought a formula to reconcile the two. But they regarded Hajj Amin more highly and if a choice were unavoidable they would undoubtedly recognise his pretensions. ⁶⁴

It would appear from the above that it was in the Germans' interest to support el-Kilani and in the Italians' to defend the Mufti, with whom they had been connected for so long. Some German officials actually considered the Mufti to be Italy's man,* while others-and influential ones at that-did not believe his Italian sympathies were sincere. 65 The Mufti himself maintained that his pro-Italian disposition was invented by Grobba. 66 The Germans probably knew, not only from el-Kilani's accusations but from Ciano himself, 67 that Hajj Amin had for a long time been in the pay of the Italians. Berlin was, however, inclined to the view that he was a consummate politician who understood the realities of Italo-German relations. 68 Although el-Kilani was very compliant on the question of DAL, the Germans could not support him against the Mufti, owing to their relations with Italy. El-Kilani made no secret of his dislike for Italy and he obviously wanted to benefit from the lack of agreement between the Axis partners on Arab questions, but the Germans did not like to disclose that fact at the time. The Mufti, who was an experienced intriguer, skilfully hinted to the Italians that the Germans were conducting, in secret, a policy in Arab matters directed against Italian interests. True, the Germans created the appearance of granting el-Kilani equal recognition (when he was received by Hitler, for instance, in July 1942, after energetic insistence), but German officials engaged in Arab affairs had to concede that the Mufti was more realistic and that his policies were more in accordance with Italo-German agreements.69

It is quite possible that an opinion prevailed in decisive German circles that the Mufti was a stronger person, corresponding more closely to the Nazi concept of a leader. Hitler, for instance, praised his 'exceptional cleverness' which made him 'almost equal to the Japanese'. It is probable, too, that Hajj Amin's contacts with the

^{*} Dr. Grobba for instance. (See his notes, Berlin June 19th, 1942—71/51151-3.)

S.S. and Gestapo, particularly with the machinery engaged in exterminating the European Jews, influenced the German leaders' opinion of him. Racial considerations were also advanced in his favour. In his notes for the Abwehr, Professor Schrumpf, an Alsatian renegade who practised medicine in Cairo for a long time, wrote that the Mufti represented a Circassian type. 'As I have stated many times before, he is hence not an "Arab", but owing to the operation of the Mendelian law and the inherited ancestral traits, Circassian blood began to predominate in his family.' And 'this is important from a psychological viewpoint', concluded Pierre Schrumpf—who suddenly felt like a German when refused a university chair in France—'since pure Arab blood could first of all not have been so consistent and systematic in the struggle against the English and the Jews, he would certainly also have been bought off. What is more, that Caucasian or Aryan blood enables us to expect from the Mufti in the future the faithfulness of an ally of which pure Arab blood would be incapable.'70

Incidentally, the racial physiognomies of Zulficar-pasha and Ishaq Derwish were also approved in the German envoy's reports.⁷¹

Hitler describes the red-bearded and blue-eyed Hajj Amin somewhat differently in details, but with the same racist approval. With his blond hair and blue eyes, said the Führer of the Third Reich on July 1st, 1942 about the Mufti, he gives the impression that, despite his sharp physiognomy resembling a mouse, he is a person who has among his ancestors more than one Aryan with probably the best Roman heritage. Thus the sympathy of the Nazi chiefs for the Mufti was well grounded; his ability, unscrupulousness, his deep hatred for the Jews were highly valued, and even his 'Aryan-resembling' features found favour.

On September 9th, 1942, the Italian Foreign Ministry imparted the news to the German Embassy in Rome that the idea had been projected in recent conversations with the Mufti of Jerusalem that the Axis should recognise him in writing as the leader of the secret all-Arab organisation. The Italians proposed that as in the case of the declaration supporting the Arab national demands, this question, too, should be managed by an exchange of letters between the Mufti and the two Governments. They further informed their ally that Count Vitetti was preparing the text of the letters and that they would be submitted to Berlin as soon as approved by Ciano.⁷³

The above propositions arose during discussions at which Hajj Amin scaled down his demands. He wanted recognition as the only supreme leader (Einheit des Kommandos) in Arab affairs, hence as the exclusive leader of all Axis activity in the Arab world. The Italians considered it difficult to meet this request because they did not want to give up their other contacts. They had particularly to

reckon with the wishes of the Egyptian leaders gathered around King Farouk and Ali Maher-pasha, but they had to take seriously the Mufti's warning that he would face great difficulties in North Africa without the recognition he desired.* It must be assumed, too, that the Italians, no less than the Mufti himself, were interested in frustrating el-Kilani's efforts and subordinating him to Hajj Amin.

On September 14th the Palazzo Chigi handed the Reich Embassy a note, the contents of which were sanctioned by Mussolini. It proposed recognition of the Mufti as 'the responsible leader of the organisation *The Arab Nation* and a spokesman of the national movement of which that organisation is a part in all the Arab countries of the Near East'. The Italians also proposed the texts of the letter to be addressed by the Mufti to Mussolini and Count Ciano's reply in the Duce's name. Both texts hinted that the recognition of el-Huseini as the supreme and sole leader of the Pan-Arabist organisation was necessitated by his expected activities in Egypt and the North African front.⁷⁴

Aware of the Mufti's efforts, Rashid Ali told the Italians and Germans that the organisation was a figment of the Mufti's imagination. He proposed that information on this should be solicited from other Arab leaders, particularly Adel Arslan and Naji Shawkat.⁷⁵ El-Kilani was deeply worried by the Mufti's pretensions and tried to prove that he was a religious leader and held no political position whatever in the Arab world.⁷⁶

The Germans did not reply immediately to the proposal to recognise the Mufti as the leader of all Arab nationalists. Ribbentrop despatched Ettel to Rome to check on the existence of the alleged organisation. He was ordered to sound out the Palazzo Chigi and to get evidence from Hajj Amin confirming his claims.⁷⁷

Ettel's trip could have no other result but confirmation of the Mufti's claims. Perhaps that was its aim. Having already committed itself on the matter, the Italian Foreign Ministry could certainly not be expected to withdraw its views before Ettel. A cunning intriguer, disposing of a clique of loyal people, a man who would not stop at the murder of his political opponents, the Mufti could always manage to supply some kind of proof. Ettel himself was a partisan of the Mufti, and it is likely that Ribbentrop and Woermann were aware of this. Besides, being a fanatical Nazi, Ettel was not distinguished by ability for independent political analysis.†

^{*} Mackensen's despatch, Rome, September 14th, 1942—71/51214—18. The Mufti was perhaps justified in pointing to the difficulties; for his popularity was slight outside the countries of the Fertile Crescent.

[†] We formed this opinion from Ettel's reports, which, among other things, contain an extremely naive assessment of the German-Soviet treaty and the

THE MUFTI'S ARGUMENTS

Ettel stayed in Rome from October 1st to 12th. Together with Dörtenbach—an official working on Arab affairs in the German Embassy to the Quirinal—he visited Count Vitetti, who declared the conviction of the Italian Government that the Arab secret organisation existed. He claimed that the conviction was based on the reports of Italian envoys and consuls in Arab lands over many years. The Jerusalem Mufti, argued Vitetti, would not have been able to combat the English and Jews for twenty years if he did not dispose of such an organisation, and the Italian Government considered it improper to demand from him proof of its existence.

In his conversations with Ettel, the Mufti repeated his previous allegations to Weizsäcker, Woermann, Grobba and to Ettel himself. He declared that he possessed a number of statements by members of that organisation. He presented letters from Naji Shawkat, Dr. Farhan el-Jandali, Muhammed Hasan Abu Suud, Muhammed el-Afifi and Muhammed Subhi Abu Ghanima. 78 The statements of Abu Suud and el-Afifi were identical. The Syrian el-Jandali and the Transjordanian Abu Ghanima declared that they had been members of the secret organisation for many years and worked under the orders of the Mufti of Jerusalem. Naji Shawkat made the longest statement (the contents have been discussed in Chapter VIII). He described a meeting with the Mufti at Baghdad on February 28th, 1941, at which 'Rashid Ali swore on the Holy Koran that he is joining the organisation and will be faithful to its programme and members for the rest of his life. All present took the same oath.' This was written by Naji Shawkat in reply to a letter from the Mufti⁷⁹ asking him to confirm certain circumstances connected with a meeting of seven leaders on February 28th, 1941.

The fact of the common oath indicates, in our opinion, that all present agreed to launch a common action. It seems therefore that the February 28th meeting was the first session of the group of conspirators who carried out the *coup d'état* in Iraq and not a meeting of old members of the all-Arab organisation which Rashid Ali was alleged to have joined on that occasion as a new convert.

Salah ed-Din es-Sabbagh, who describes the February 28th meeting, also recalls that each one present took a 'solemn oath.'80 His account leaves the impression that it was the founding meeting of the anti-British conspiracy in Iraq.

Italo-German alliance. (See also U. K. Haddad, Harakat Rashid Ali el-Kilani 1941 Sana—The Rashid Ali el-Kilani Movement of 1941—op. cit., p. 132; Schultze-Holthus, Daybreak in Iran, a Story of the German Intelligence Service, London, 1954, pp. 13–15 and 70–71.)

THE ARAB LEGION AND MUFTI-KILANI DISPUTE

At best, Naji Shawkat's letter testified to the existence at the time of a secret organisation at Baghdad, or rather a conspiracy headed by the Mufti. The letter says nothing about the existence of such an organisation in other countries. This was supposed to be taken care of by the letters of the others, mentioned above. Particularly important was the testimony of Abu Suud and el-Afifi, who had for a long time been partisans of Hajj Amin. They testified that as members of the administration of Hizb al-Umma al-Arabiyya they knew that the party had decided to reorganise its executive committee in Iraq, and that the Mufti had participated at a meeting on February 27th, 1941,* at which the executive had been constituted and its members had taken oaths. This was meant to explain at the same time that a general oath had been necessary, since a new executive of the Iraq section of the all-Arab organisation had been formed. Certain contradictions are noticeable between Shawkat's letter and those of the two Palestinians, since the former speaks not of the establishment of an executive but of Rashid Ali's joining the organisation.

What is more, a discussion took place in the Arab press in 1957 of some German documents relating to the conflict between Hajj Amin and Rashid Ali. In a conversation with the Cairo correspondent of al-Akhbar the ex-Mufti did not recall the existence of any secret Hizb al-Umma al-Arabiyya, nor that he had insisted to the Axis Governments that such an organisation did exist. From what the Mufti said, it is doubtful if the co-operation among the Pan-Arab leaders of the various Arab countries took an organised form in Baghdad.† In the light of the above interview it seems that in 1941 (or perhaps in 1940] there had existed in Baghdad only loose contacts among politicians from Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq, and it was not an all-Arab organisation, but the Mufti and some Iraqi leaders, including Rashid Ali and the army officers, who had organised a conspiracy on February 28th, 1941.

RESULTS OF ETTEL'S TRIP

After concluding his investigation, S.S. Obergruppenführer Ettel

* [Sic!] The present writer, however, assumes that this meeting took place on February 28th, 1941. In this he follows es-Sabbagh's Diary (Fursan al-uruba fi al-Iraq—Knights of Arabism in Iraq—Damascus, 1956, p. 218) and M. Khadduri's Independent Iraq (op. cit., p. 308). In this letter Naji Shawkat does not give the precise date, only that the meeting took place 'in February'.

† Al-Akhbar, September 2nd, 1957, no. 1608, pp. 5-6. In the interview with the correspondent of that paper, Hajj Amin used the word lajna and not once the word hizb—party. He stated that there actually was no such committee as mentioned in the German documents, but an 'association of Arab solidarity' (majmua arabiyya mutadhamina) which assumed the task of realising the Arab national

demands.

proceeded to discuss the exchange of letters in which the Axis was to recognise the Mufti as the leader of the all-Arab organisation. It was agreed that Hajj Amin should address personal letters to Ciano and von Ribbentrop and not to Mussolini and Hitler as previously proposed. He was then to receive from each of them a personal reply. The replies were to read alike and their texts had already been agreed to with the Mufti.⁸¹

We have found no confirmation in German documents that the exchange of letters took place. In the middle of December the Mufti again demanded recognition, but the Axis authorities then proposed to alter the texts of the letters⁸² because of the change in the military situation which did not encourage the taking of basic decisions on Arab questions. There is some evidence, too, that Auswärtiges Amt began to consider that kind of intervention in internal Arab affairs as being harmful.⁸³

It must therefore be assumed that the exchange of letters never took place. In reality the Mufti already occupied supreme place in the Axis' Arab policy. With the lessening of Axis opportunities in the Arab countries the Mufti stepped up his activity in other Muslim affairs: for instance, in making contacts with Axis adherents in the Caucasus and Central Asia, in the organisation of S.S. units among Balkan Muslims, etc. Nuremberg trial material indicated the Mufti's ominous role in the extermination of European Jewry.⁸⁴

Ettel's Rome mission and the decision taken then led to the elimination of Dr. Grobba. He had already been deprived of his functions as liaison man with the Mufti. That position went to Ettel. On October 17th, 1942, the latter sent Ribbentrop an extensive memorandum on the results of his trip to Italy and his conclusions. After formulating the tasks of the Third Reich in the Arab East in the light of Italo-German relations, Ettel drew a number of personal conclusions.

Ettel's notes are one expression of the contradiction-ridden character of Germany's Arab policy. On the one hand, it was clear to Ettel that Italy did not enjoy the Arabs' sympathy. On the other hand, Germany, which at that time had many Arab friends, recognised Rome's hegemony in Arab affairs. It was because of this, in Ettel's opinion, that Germany had to appear as 'an honest broker wooed by both sides', and the Reich ought to occupy the key position and exert an influence on Arab affairs without encroaching on Italy's priority. Ettel stressed that it was therefore unnecessary to inform the Arab people of the promises made to the Italians by Berlin in relation to the Arab countries. El-Kilani, complained Ettel, refused to recognise that intricate situation, whereas the Mufti of Jerusalem considered German-Italian co-operation as an independent necessity

THE ARAB LEGION AND MUFTI-KILANI DISPUTE

and reckoned on coming to an understanding with Germany after the victory, since the Reich would not then be obliged to consider the interests of its Italian partner.

Ettel continues with a litany of accusations against Grobba: His activity negatively affected German-Italian relations. He spoiled relations with the Mufti and caused a conflict between the Mufti and el-Kilani and an internal struggle among the Arabs under the Axis wing. Neither his political line nor his character, reported Ettel to his Minister, make him fit to handle Arab affairs. And Grobba's ambition was to determine the destiny of the Arab countries as a 'High Commissioner', together with el-Kilani, who was dependent on him.* Ettel proposed in conclusion that German policy on Arab matters should be entrusted to Prüfer, former Ambassador to Brazil, who had just returned to Germany.†

In other notes, probably written in December 1942, the author accused Grobba of behaving towards the Mufti in a way recalling the methods of Freemasonry, in which he held a high degree and had left only in 1934. Besides, in Ettel's opinion 'the Arab problem is indissolubly connected with the Jewish question. The Jews are the Arabs' deadly enemies just as they are the deadly enemies of Germany. Whoever in Germany occupies himself with Arab problems must be a convinced and uncompromising enemy of the Jews.'86

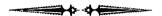
Dr. Grobba and Dr. Granow were eliminated from Arab affairs⁸⁷ and transferred to Paris. This was at the turn of 1942, when the Axis were defeated at el-Alamein and fighting was going on in Tunisia.

* M. Khadduri similarly estimates Grobba's position (op. cit., p. 239).

[†] Prüfer entered Auswärtiges Amt in 1907 as a Dragomanatsaspirant at the Cairo consulate. He later qualified as a Privatdozent in Semitic languages. He served in Turkey during 1914–17 and later worked in the Constantinople Embassy. In the interwar period he was Consul in Tbilisi, envoy at Addis-Ababa and then Ambassador in Brazil (Neurath-4, IMT, Vol. XL).

XIV

EPILOGUE IN TUNISIA



N November 1942 Nazi interest in the Arab lands centred on Tunisia. The Axis forces were on the offensive until the autumn of that year. The battle of el-Alamein (October 23rd), the landing of British and American troops in North Africa (November 8th), and above all the Soviet counter-offensive on the Volga (November 19th) opened a new phase of the war—the period of defeat of the Axis. During their offensive the Germans were primarily interested in those Arab countries which lay in the sphere of British domination. Berlin rejected outright the possibility of utilising Arab nationalism in North Africa, although, as we have seen, this position reacted negatively on German policy in the Asian Arab lands and in Egypt. From the time they assumed the defensive in November 1942 the Germans had to pay attention to Tunisia, an Arab country administered by Vichy, which was to be Italy's prize after the victory. From the middle of November 1942 that country was occupied by German and Italian troops.

OCCUPATION OF TUNISIA

On November 8th British and American forces commanded by General Dwight Eisenhower landed in Algeria and Morocco. The resistance of the French troops faithful to Vichy did not last long. The fighting lasted longest on the Atlantic coast of Morocco and was shortest in Algeria.¹ Darlan, who was incidentally in Algeria visiting his sick son, went over to the Allies. The seizure of unoccupied France by the Axis forces was followed by a complete understanding between the North African partisans of the Vichy régime and the American command (November 13th). General de Gaulle, who back in 1940 had advocated continuation of the fight against the Axis, was temporarily excluded. The power of the Vichy supporters in North Africa was curbed only after the murder of Darlan (December 24th, 1942) and following the Casablanca Conference² (January 14th–25th, 1943).

The Germans did not expect an enemy landing in North Africa.³ Deceived by Allied counter-intelligence, they took it for granted that a landing would be attempted on some island in the Western Mediterranean.⁴ Berlin to a certain degree counted on French resistance in North Africa,⁵ but that illusion quickly evaporated. It was necessary to act, and on November 10th Hitler ordered the creation of a bridgehead in Tunisia.

Military and political circumstances favoured such a step. First of all, the Allies made landings in Morocco and Algeria, but left out Tunisia. This prolonged the North African fighting for several months. It is true that the U.S. Consul-General, Dolittle, informed the French Residency in Tunisia (at 2 a.m. on November 8th) of President Roosevelt's message that the Allies were making landings in Morocco, Algeria, Cape Bône and in Tunisia, but there were no landings at the last two named places.

Secondly, the French military and civil administration in Tunisia did not hamper the Germans from establishing and expanding the bridgehead. On November 8th the Vichy Government agreed to the overflight of Luftwaffe planes in unoccupied France and provided airfields. They also permitted the landing of German aircraft in Tunisia and the stationing of German and Italian troops there. By order of his Government, General Georges Barré, French Commander-in-Chief in Tunisia, withdrew his army to the south-west. He was probably disoriented by the constantly changing orders from Vichy and Algeria and he was reluctant to make a premature decision as to which side to be on. The French army numbered about 25,000 men in Tunisia, a good part of which was made up of colonial units.7 The Bizerta naval base was of great military significance, with its strong coastal fortifications and a number of war vessels. After the withdrawal of General Barré's forces, this base was held by French Marines commanded by Admiral Derrien, who wanted to issue an order to fight the Germans as soon as he heard of the landing of Allied troops. But he was persuaded to withdraw the order by the Resident-General, Admiral Estéva.8 It is worth noting that the French generals in Algeria had not at that time made a definite decision to go over to the Allies and considered the possibility of staying neutral.

Such was the situation when German planes commanded by Colonel Harlinghausen arrived in Tunisia on November 9th at 11 p.m.⁹ More German and Italian aircraft followed in the next few days, and a regular transport of men and equipment was organised. But it was a month before the Axis considered their troops superior to Vichy's.¹⁰

Rudolf Rahn arrived in Tunis with his team on November 15th.¹¹

At the request of OKW, and with Hitler's agreement, Ribbentrop appointed him Auswärtiges Amt representative (VAA) in North Africa. ¹² Owing to the balance of forces being unfavourable to the Axis, Rahn's chief concern in the first few days was to prevent the Vichy forces in Tunisia from turning against the Axis. His personal persuasion in this respect was, of course, much less significant than the authority of the Vichy Government. At Rahn's request Laval intervened many times when relations worsened between the occupation army and the French authorities. ¹³ Rahn was therefore mainly interested in strengthening the loyalty of the local officials to the Vichy Government, which had in the meantime lost its last shred of sovereignty. He was concerned with influencing the leading French authorities in Tunisia, particularly Admirals Estéva and Derrien, ¹⁴ to declare their loyalty.

ADMIRAL ESTÉVA

It seems that the German emissary confronted no great difficulties in this task. Admiral Estéva, French Resident-General in Tunisia from July 1940, no longer young, a weak man and subject to pressure, was loyal to Pétain. But the Axis nevertheless had much to reproach him for. The fact is that the Germans favoured removing him or at least reducing his powers in the first few days after establishing the bridgehead,* but later opposed Laval's proposal to this effect. It follows from the despatches of German representatives in Tunisia as from the proceedings of the Lyons court (March 12th–15th, 1945)¹⁵ that Estéva was a man of very limited horizons, who worried not so much over the fate of the war as over maintaining France's authority over the country entrusted to his rule.

Axis occupation, of course, undermined France's position in Tunisia. On the other hand, though the Germans had promised Tunisia to Mussolini after the war and the victory, they decided to maintain the *status quo* while the war was on. Rahn could therefore assure Admiral Estéva as to the short-term destiny of French rule. And on the highest level Hitler offered Pétain the joint defence of France's North African empire, thus precluding the possibility of immediate political changes. Such assurances and promises were necessary to save the vanishing loyalty of France's North African officials and to weaken resistance to the Axis invasion. This circumstance determined the line of Germany's political activity in Tunisia,

^{*} Abetz's despatch, Paris, November 19th, 1942—1246/337277. Rahn proposed that General Dentz, who worked with him in Syria, should be delegated to Tunisia, but Dentz refused (despatch of the Paris Embassy, November 23rd 1942—1246/337283).

though the Nazis' chief argument for the French officials was the threat of repression and still greater terror in France to retaliate for the lack of loyalty by the French colonial apparatus in Africa.

The French Resident-General never for a moment thought of resisting the Axis forces. Nor was he one of those politicians who proclaimed the 'European Idea' and saw their country's future in the victory of the Nazi Reich. Estéva probably no longer believed in an Axis victory. Rahn wrote of him: '... with his passivity and protests on various occasions he is constantly trying to assure himself a way out in case of an American advance'. 16 The Resident-General agreed to render virtually every service the Germans desired, but displayed no initiative, 17 or at least always less than the Nazis demanded of him. Many French officials hated Germany or were outright Gaullists and often resorted to sabotage.* Estéva himself frequently shunned inconvenient decisions 18 and in many cases closed his eyes to double dealing by officials and military men. 19 On November 13th he released from prison several political prisoners—Gaullists and Communists—and permitted them to depart for Algeria.20 Before then he had ordered that rolling stock and locomotives should be moved out of Tunisia and the broadcasting station damaged.²¹ These orders were issued when Estéva found out about German planes landing on the airfield of el-Awina near Tunis. They show that while not prepared to resist the country's occupation, Estéva did not intend to give the Axis his entire support.

OCCUPATION OF BIZERTA

It was still possible for some time to resist the Axis armed forces in Tunisia. This is attested to at least by the case of Bizerta, which kept the German Command in a constant state of anxiety. At the end of November 1942 Field-Marshal Kesselring, Commander-in-Chief of the Southern Front, ordered security measures at the Bizerta military base in order to prevent the French troops and naval units stationed there from going over to the Allies. This order anticipated the forceful occupation of the base and coastal batteries. But Admiral Weichhold still regarded it as impossible to carry this out, because of the unfavourable balance of forces.²² The Axis feared that the Bizerta garrison might break with the Vichy Government. Such a development towards the end of November could have been very dangerous

^{*}See R. Rahn, Ruheloses Leben (Restless Life), Düsseldorf, 1949, p. 205. 'Those who lived in France during the war know that a bureaucracy determined to resist can make life into a hell while most affably explaining their behaviour by the need to carry out their duties.'

for the Axis, since Allied troops had reached the immediate vicinity of Tunis and Rahn had already sent off his employees with radio transmitter and code materials to Naples.23 The Axis troops only consolidated their position at the beginning of December.²⁴ But some German circles thought even then that they could persuade the French troops to evacuate Bizerta voluntarily in exchange for releasing 30,000 to 50,000 French prisoners.* The war and merchant ships anchored in Bizerta would in that case be leased to Germany. The Nazis felt strong enough by December 8th to give Admiral Derrien an ultimatum that the ships, batteries, all port facilities and military equipment must be turned over to them in perfect condition. The German's feared that the Bizerta fleet would meet the same fate as the one at Toulon, which the French scuttled rather than turn it over to the Germans. They therefore included in the ultimatum the threat to destroy ruthlessly the ships, batteries and military camps as well as to exterminate the entire garrison in the event of resistance, damaging or sinking any of the ships. Admiral Derrien capitulated.† All the coastal batteries, artillery, the arsenal, three torpedo boats, one destroyer, nine submarines and two reconnaissance ships fell into the hands of the Germans and 10,000 soldiers were demobilised, 7,000 of them colonials.²⁵ But it is significant that after the demobilisation the Axis Command did not have enough soldiers to guard the Bizerta and Tunis military installations.²⁶

PROBLEM OF THE REAR

Thus the Axis only completed the occupation of the Tunisian bridgehead on December 9th. On that day General Nehring was replaced by General von Arnim as Commander-in-Chief in Tunisia.²⁷ An important weakness of the Axis position was lack of an organised rear. The French Resident-General was passive, as we saw, the French administration often resisted and the population passively awaited a change in the military situation from one day to the next. With an increasing number of Axis troops and the complete demobilisation

^{*} Rahn to AA, undated (November 29th or 30th, 1942—1276/343081-2; Rahn to AA, December 3rd, 1942—1276/343092-3; U. Cavallero, *Comando Supremo*, Bologna, 1948, p. 403. That initiative was taken by Kesselring, supported by Rahn, who sent his closest co-worker, Möllhausen, to Berlin in order to put through that viewpoint. (See Rahn to Ribbentrop, December 2nd, 1942—1276/343089; Rahn to AA, December 3rd, 1942—op. cit.; Rahn to AA, December 6th, 1942—1276/343101). Rommel decidedly opposed such a solution (Cavallero, op. cit.).

[†] G. London, L'Amiral Estéva et le Général Dentz devant la Haute Cour de Justice, Lyons, 1945, pp. 17-18. According to Estéva's indictment the ultimatum was delivered on December 9th.

of the French forces, the problem of servicing the occupation army was bound to become an urgent one. It was necessary to maintain and guard military facilities, to organise the loading and transport of reinforcements and supplies, to build military installations, fortifications, etc. It was also necessary to gather information on the disposition and movements of the Allied troops, assure the functioning of counter-espionage agencies, assign to the units field guides, etc. The situation became more complicated by the panics caused by Allied bombing. Thus, by the middle of December, Rahn alarmed his superiors about the danger of chaos from the food shortage and the flight of the population from the towns. He wrote that there were not enough people to bury the dead and care for the wounded, that there was hunger and danger of epidemics and that the Axis forces were too weak to check the stream of refugees or to maintain order.²⁸

What forces were in a position to co-operate with the Axis authorities to organise the rear and carry out the above tasks? There were three basic groups in Tunisia which could be considered: the French (i.e., the administration and civilian population), the Italians, of whom there were many in the country, and the Arabs, who constituted the overwhelming majority, and had their own leadership from the Bey of Tunis, el-Munsef, and his court and the Néo-Destour party.

The simplest and most effective way for the Axis was to lean on the French, who still exercised some authority and had the experience of ruling Tunisia. To transfer that power to the Italians or Arabs might have led to unfavourable results for the Germans not only in Tunisia but in France too. For it would have aroused dissatisfaction among the advocates of collaboration and would have led in Tunisia—at least temporarily—to the disorganisation of the civil support for the bridgehead.

EXTREME COLLABORATIONISTS

The Germans found it convenient to maintain the French administration, and to appeal for collaboration in the name of the 'European Idea'. They considered they could use, in that way, the adherents of Pétain, sensu stricto, as well as the extremist Fascist elements. Much more zeal for the war and sympathy for the Germans could be expected from the supporters of Doriot or Darnand than from the conservative partisans of the aged Marshal. What was more, those people could serve as a check on the administration, which the Germans accused of passivity and disloyalty.

That is why the Nazi rulers supported such groupings as Doriot's

Compagnons de la France,* Chantiers de la Jeunesse,† and Service d'Ordre Légionnaire (SOL).‡

A central role in realising the Axis' plans in this respect belonged to a certain Jacques Guilbaud, who was an extreme collaborationist. He was delegated to Tunisia by Marion, the Vichy Propaganda Minister, who was a renegade from Communism, like Doriot and Guilbaud. § He arrived in Tunisia on November 23rd and went to work at once. One of Guilbaud's first achievements was the uniting of a number of youth organisations into a common front, called the Committee for Unity of Revolutionary Action (CUAR), which he led. The extreme collaborationist grouping set up an auxiliary police force which co-operated with the official police, where anti-German elements had great influence. The collaborationists took over a small radio station and one weekly magazine, the Tunis Journal. They planned to form their own legion to fight the Allies under German command.²⁹ Their members also served the Germans in various other respects. After the occupation of Bizerta they conducted intensive propaganda in the attempt to soften the general shock and weaken the will to struggle. They combatted the Resistance Movement and Allied intelligence and exerted pressure on the Residency-General.³⁰ And, most important, they assisted the Germans in weeding out of the Tunisian administrative apparatus all officials (including those highly placed) who for one or another reason did not suit the Nazi occupant.

In this manner a French centre was set up which, with the help of the Germans, competed with the Residency. The object of this was to provide an opportunity for stirring up friction in order to benefit from it.³¹ And the Germans wanted to legalise this situation. At Rahn's request the occupation authorities in France attempted in December to get the broadest possible authorisation for Guilbaud from the Vichy Government. At first this involved the authority to direct the Press, the radio and such organizations as those mentioned above as well as making him a direct representative of and responsible to the Vichy Government.³² This would give him official status independent of the Residency and Guilbaud did receive such authorisation, since it was in accordance with his mission for the

^{*} A youth organisation sponsored by Vichy.

[†] Youth camps which in Vichy France took the place of military service.

[‡] Formally, the public order division of the nation-wide collaborationist organisation Légion des Combattants et Volontaires Français helped the Vichy Government and occupation authorities to combat the Resistance movement.

[§] Rahn, op. cit., pp. 207-8; P. Farmer, Vichy Political Dilemma, Columbia University Press, 1955, p. 266; London, op. cit., p. 52. Doriot offered to help the Axis troops in Tunisia, where he had his organisation. (See two letters from Doriot to Rahn, of November 12th and 19th, 1942—2160 H/470143-4.)

Propaganda Ministry.³³ But the authorisation, in fact, proved inadequate for the broad activity developed by this man and the CUAR which he founded. This is why the Germans further suggested that he should be appointed as Civil Commissioner, empowered to control the French administration and with the right to countersign Admiral Estéva's reports to the Vichy Government.³⁴ Thus through Guilbaud and his accomplices the Nazis would gain complete control of governmental functions in Tunisia, which would otherwise be beyond their reach. The Germans were particularly interested in the control of the communications channels between the French authorities in Tunisia and the Vichy Government.

But this project never left the ground. True, Laval agreed with the basic idea of appointing a Civil State Commissioner, but he proposed that office for his own man, Professor Devinat, who, as an experienced official in colonial matters, could eventually replace Admiral Estéva.³⁵ But this was opposed by the Germans, for they did not want a man of this kind in Tunisia. Rahn offered the following objection:

I absolutely advise against sending Devinat to Tunisia. We must avoid having an energetic person here in whom Laval has confidence, with experience in colonial affairs; since such a person could defend the French viewpoint with greater authority against us and especially against the Italians. . . . Despite his intelligence and energy, Guilbaud is too much preoccupied with the . . . European ideology to maintain a pure French course here, which Devinat undoubtedly will do.³⁶

The Germans were not concerned with the appointment of a Civil Commissioner and the creation of an additional French centre of government. They were interested in consolidating the position of Guilbaud, whom Rahn regarded as a useful German tool serving to weaken systematically France's position in Tunisia. Guilbaud, for instance, took the German hint and refrained from propagating France's rights to Tunisia.³⁷ His Committee for Unity Revolutionary Action (CUAR) was much more subservient to the Germans than Laval's Vichy.* The upshot of the whole matter was that Professor Devinat was not delegated to Tunisia.

THE FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

With the direct help of the French administration the Germans drew the civilian population into collaboration. At the demand of the Germans a mobilisation was carried through in the public utilities:

* Rahn to AA, December 26th, 1942—1276/343158-9. 'If the Residency maintains the right to direct code contact with Vichy,' wrote Rahn, 'there is the danger that they will denounce Guilbaud's aid which is so precious to us.'

gasworks, water mains, power-houses, bakeries, slaughter-houses, etc., and an epidemic-fighting service was organised. Admiral Derrien remained in occupied Bizerta by request of the German Command which did not think it would be possible to service the port properly³⁸ (so important for an army which was partly provisioned by sea) without him. A small group of officers loyal to the Laval Government worked with Derrien.³⁹

The French administration played an important role in mobilising labour to build fortifications on the Tunisian bridgehead. 40 By agreement with Kesselring, General Nehring issued an order on December 6th mobilising the men on occupied territory to build fortifications. Particular attention was paid to the mobilisation of Jews for that work. Leaders of the Jewish community were compelled to organise labour groups and individuals had to be indicated in each group who were to be responsible for co-operating with the German authorities and for the fulfilment of orders. According to Nehring's order such people were to be treated as hostages. The Jewish communities had to provide food and equipment for the Jewish labour groups, in distinction to other groups. While the members of the other groups received some remuneration, the Jews were forced to work for nothing.41 At Rome's request, Jews of Italian citizenship were excused from this forced labour. 42 The Germans also levied special tribute on the Jews, with which they paid 50 million francs indemnity for aerial bombing, mostly to Arabs. 43

With the contraction of the Tunisian bridgehead by the end of March 1943, the Germans wanted to introduce obligatory labour service for Frenchmen of several age groups. ⁴⁴ Following a decree of the occupation authorities, Estéva ordered the mobilisation of three age groups on April 12th. The Residency-General was to finance the work. The corps of non-commissioned officers for the mobilised Frenchmen was recruited from the SOL, technical fulfilment was under the jurisdiction of the Wehrmacht and the Arbeitsdienst; while the CUAR was responsible for conducting the propaganda for the mobilisation and carrying it out. ⁴⁵

ORGANISATION OF FRENCH DETACHMENTS

The Laval Government and the French collaborationists undertook to form regiments to fight the Allies. The French army in the metropolis was demobilised after German troops took over the non-occupied zone. Only a small force remained to maintain order. This also happened in Tunisia after the evacuation of General Barré's forces and the occupation of Bizerta. The planned 'African Falange' to the strength of one division to be equipped, trained and controlled by

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the Germans,* would then constitute Vichy's only fighting formation, besides the 'Anti-Bolshevik Legion'.

A group of French officers arrived in Tunisia in December 1942, to form a French military mission attached to the Axis command. Originally this mission was entrusted by Vichy with broad tasks: its members were to serve as officers in units loyal to Vichy and to influence vacillating detachments and those who had gone over to the Allies. Among other things, they were to send emissaries to General Barré's forces and attract local Frenchmen and Arabs to the fighting units. As a result of the demobilisation after the occupation of Bizerta, these tasks became mostly unreal. But it was still possible to send agents, to contact French war prisoners and to form fighting units in Tunisia.⁴⁶ The Germans' main concern in organising such units was to weaken the morale of the French units fighting on the side of the Allies.⁴⁷ One of the newly arrived officers, du Jonchay, became the temporary director of the Resident-General's office⁴⁸ (on January 5th, 1943).

Lieutenant-Colonel Cristofini first headed the enrolment, but was replaced, after being wounded, by battalion chief Curnier. These officers were also in turn the chiefs of the French military mission with the Axis Tunisia Command.

The enrolment campaign brought very modest results. Most of the suitable people preferred to join the armed militia of the collaborationist organisations, particularly when SOL received General von Arnim's permission (on December 12th) to form guards companies and labour brigades and to staff them: they preferred to guard various buildings, patrol streets, control permits to trade in tobacco or to be active in the camps of *Chantiers de la Jeunesse*. By order of the German authorities no broad propaganda was conducted for joining fighting units.⁴⁹

On January 1st, 1943, the German Command permitted the formation of one company of volunteers in Tunisia to fight at the front, and they promised that they might permit, in the future, the formation of another fighting company and even bring from France a larger volunteer unit.⁵⁰ A company of 150 was organised during January and sent to a training camp. Formation of a second company was started and several labour battalions were enrolled for military works. 'With few exceptions these soldiers are recruited among the adventurers and the lowest social strata,' wrote Colonel Jonchay to Laval.† The majority of those who joined the fighting

^{*} Woermann to Rahn, Berlin, December 24th, 1942—1246/337330. These matters were agreed to during Laval's conversation with Hitler in December 1942.

[†] Jonchay's report to Laval: Situation générale en Tunisie, Tunis, February

units were Tunisian Arabs. When transferred on German orders to Arab volunteer formations (February 13th, 1943), only about 100 Frenchmen remained in both companies.⁵¹ It consequently took a long time to form the first French volunteer company. With the closest co-operation of the collaborationist organisations, particularly of SOL, it was organised only in the middle of March, when 206 men took an oath of loyalty to Pétain and Hitler.⁵² This company left for the front at the beginning of April. The French military mission then started to form another company.⁵³ and completed the organisation of a pioneers' battalion.⁵⁴ Three French Legionnaires got the Iron Cross class II on Hitler's birthday.⁵⁵

This time the collaborationists rendered services to the Nazi authorities without any reciprocity on their part. For it is difficult to call 'contrepartie' such concessions by the Germans as turning over to the French authorities individuals exposed by Frenchmen as working with the Allies, 56 or the release of French war prisoners and their transport to France.* In the same way, that is by sending them off to France, the Germans got rid of French officials who did not suit them. 57 The initiative in these alleged concessions came from the Germans, who had concrete aims in view such as combating Allied espionage, influencing Frenchmen fighting with the Allies to desert or to surrender as prisoners, etc.†

As we shall see, the servility of the French administration and the collaborationists' active aid did not deter the Germans from systematically undermining French rule in Tunisia, although it must be acknowledged that in realising their objectives they kept within certain limits, determined in advance.

ITALIAN AMBITIONS IN TUNISIA

It is necessary to turn next to Italy's role during the occupation of

* Ritter to Rahn, Berlin, January, 11th, 1943—1260/339012-13. The release and repatriation of prisoners was widely used by the Vichy press in France as evidence of the 'Führer's magnanimity'. (See Les Nouveaux Temps, Paris, January 16th and 18th, 1943, Petit-Parisien, January 18th, 1943.)

† Rahn (op. cit., p. 208) attributed to Guilbaud the initiative in the question of releasing prisoners of war. In that manner he 'rendered a service to his fatherland—in the narrower sense of the word', i.e. to France and not to the 'all-European' Fatherland. 'To my great surprise', wrote Rahn, in his memoirs, 'the German Headquarters accepted that proposition.' The appeal by Admiral Estéva to Frenchmen fighting on the side of the Allies, in which he cited to them German promises, was considered by the French Supreme Court as a circumstance

carrying a burden of guilt (London, op. cit., pp. 31-32).

3rd, 1943—1304/346305—8. Jonchay did not expect the report to fall into German hands. He held Cristofini responsible for the mobilisation results and charged him with a negative attitude to the former soldiers of the Regular Army.

Tunisia. As was the case with the French, the considerable Italian colony there was rather important, apart from the armed forces, political representatives and Government leaders. In the interwar period the Italian population was drawn in various ways into the Fascist political and propaganda campaign for the purpose of strengthening the influence of the Mussolini régime in the Mediterranean and finally of annexing Tunisia.

After the Axis troops landed the Italian generals proposed the immediate mobilisation of 20,000 of the Italian population there. But this was not achieved owing to the lack of equipment. It is doubtful, however, whether it could have been done on the basis of voluntary enrolment. For when the German Command requested the Italian Consul-General Silimbani to mobilise the Italians for urgent military labour he provided hardly eighty people.⁵⁸ When the Germans wanted to reinforce the numerically weak French police, who could not handle the situation caused by the bombings, and to organise an auxiliary Italian force, the Consul-General considered it impossible.⁵⁹ As mentioned above, the Italian Government created difficulties for the German anti-Jewish measures in Tunisia by demanding exceptional treatment for its Jewish citizens. Besides some sporadic demonstrations, 60 there are no reports of political activity by the Italian civilians in Tunisia. The efforts of the Italian Government in the interwar years to activate the Italian colony there and to turn it into an instrument of Rome's imperialistic ambitions⁶¹ were not very successful. During the Axis occupation of Tunisia the Italian colony failed to exert either organised or spontaneous pressure against the Germans in support of official Italian postulates.

But the Germans had to reckon at least formally with Italian demands. The desire to take over Tunisia was for many decades a central point in Italy's expansion programme. The establishment of a French protectorate over that country in 1881 was very irritating to the Italian ruling circles and played an important role in the conclusion of the alliance between Italy, Germany and Austria-Hungary in 1882. Many Italians settled in Tunisia during the next few years. Italy's special rights in that country were recognised by the convention of 1896 and the agreements of January 7th, 1935. It was then that France made far-reaching concessions to Italy in Africa, declaring its désintéressement in Abyssinia,* for instance, in exchange for

* W. C. Asker, 'The Secret Agreements Between France and Italy on Ethiopia Jan. 1935', Journal of Modern History, Vol. XXV, no. 1, pp. 47–48, and D. C. Watt, 'The Secret Laval-Mussolini Agreement of 1935 on Ethiopia', The Middle East Journal, 1961, pp. 69–78. The agreement was only partly published in 1935: the general declaration, treaties on French-Italian conflicts in North Africa, a special protocol on the Italian minority in Tunisia and the proposition for a collective Danube pact guaranteeing Austria's threatened borders. D. C. Watt

a vague Mussolini promise to co-operate with France against a resurgent Germany. On the question of Tunisia this agreement mainly contained provisions on the citizenship of Italian residents there. It was thus decided that the former regulations on Italians maintaining their relations with the motherland would remain in force up till 1945. Children of Italian citizens born between 1945 and 1965 in Tunisia were to have the right to choose citizenship upon reaching maturity, and those born after 1965 were to be recognised as French citizens. Italian schools were to be taken over by the French education authorities as private schools only after 1955. Italian citizens entitled to practise the free professions up till 1945 were to retain this right for the rest of their lives. Thus the January 7th, 1935, agreement postponed for a long time the integration of the Italian minority in Tunisia.

Stimulated by the German successes in Czechoslovakia, the Italians had demanded the annexation of Tunisia, Corsica, Nice and Savoy as far back as 1938. As mentioned above, they returned to these demands upon entering the war, and they became an official part of the Axis programme of imperialist expansion. Italian troops appeared in Tunisia in November 1942 and Rome stepped up pressure for its demands.

ITALY'S SITUATION IN 1942-3

The Italian Army was a few days late. The first German planes landed in Tunisia on the night of November 9th, whereas Italian troops arrived on the 13th. As we know, North Africa was formally regarded as an Italian front, but just as twenty-one months previously in the case of Rommel, now, too, a German general became the Commander-in-Chief and the 'PzAOK 5' (Panzer Armee Oberkommando 5) assumed the decisive role on that front. The three Italian divisions counted for less than the two German armoured divisions, one armoured grenadiers division and two infantry division. ⁶² The Germans were also superior in the air.

An Auswärtiges Amt official was the sole Axis diplomatic repre-

An Auswärtiges Amt official was the sole Axis diplomatic representative in Tunisia. The Italians only had Consular representatives. Bombieri, with the rank of envoy, did not get to Tunisia until

publishes the understanding then kept secret: a protocol on the question of consultations to be held in the event of the unilateral German abrogation of the Versailles limitations on armament, a protocol on maintaining the *status quo* in relation to fortifications and military installations in the Bab el-Mandeb zone, and correspondence on the question of economic influences in Abyssinia and on the Addis Ababa-Djibuti railway. These documents were found in the Wilhelmstrasse archives (MOO3178, MOO3183, MOO3188, MOO3191-3).

February⁶³ to replace Silimbani, whom the Germans accused of cowardice.⁶⁴ The Rome Government had to limit itself from the outset to requesting General Nehring's support of the Italian Consular authorities in looking after the interests of the Italian citizens. The Italian instructions indicate that Rome expected its citizens to play an important role in the war operations.⁶⁵ Silimbani was to maintain close contact with German representatives and he was given very limited powers. He had to be content with the role of adviser to the Military Command on secondary matters, or in emergencies. Furthermore, he could act only after an understanding with the German representatives.⁶⁶ Because of the deep-rooted French and Arab suspicions, the Italians had serious difficulties in making local contacts,⁶⁷ and the Germans gladly acted as mediators⁶⁸ and often as arbitrators in conflicts, for instance, between Italian soldiers and Tunisian civilians.

Therefore the Germans dominated Tunisia not only militarily but also politically. The German Command tried to limit the freedom of action of the Italian authorities in the domains of internal administration, requisitions, arrests, etc., which, of course, aroused the dissatisfaction of the Italian Military Command. 69 The Germans often came out against the Italians and Arabs in defence of the French administration and police as the forces of order in the country.* Italian dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in Tunisia resulted in diplomatic interventions at the German Embassy in Rome and in Berlin.†

At that time the German leaders followed with apprehension the political dispositions of the Italians, particularly of the ruling circles. The situation in Italy', wrote an official of the Berlin Embassy in his notes to the Italian Ambassador (November 16th), 'is studied here with serious attention. It is assumed [by the Germans] that Italy's power of resistance may become so weakened any day that she will cease to play the role of a pillar supporting the defence system of the Reich southern borders.' The Germans feared the Italians would present them with some surprise. This situation required the maximum consideration for the Italians in Tunisia. And Rahn had

^{*} This occurred for instance in connection with an incident at Ksur es-Saf on March 23rd, 1943, when, to the satisfaction of Italian officials, a clash took place between the Arabs and French police. (See M. von Hagen, Oberlieutenant, Bericht über die Vorkommnisse am 23.3.1943 in Ksour Essaf—Report on the Events in Ksur es-Saf on March 23rd, 1943—1304/346337—8).

[†] The Italian High Command and the Palazzo Chigi got the impression that the Germans did not permit joint decision-making on political questions in Tunisia. This was said by Marquis d'Ajeta to von Bismarck on the 6th or 7th of December, 1942 (Ribbentrop to the Rome Embassy, Berlin, December 14th, 1942—975/303000-2).

instructions from Ribbentrop in this connection that 'on all political questions emerging in Tunisia priority should go to the Italians and our own political activity should be rather directed to the development of the situation in Algeria and Morocco'.⁷¹ The Rome Embassy, which submitted the Italian complaints to Berlin, was instructed by Ribbentrop to call the Italians' attention to the fact that Germany was considering all their wishes with regard to Tunisia.⁷²

CONFERENCE IN ROME

The above is what Ribbentrop said, but to what extent was it so in practice? Rome wanted to establish an Italo-German occupation régime in Tunisia and demanded in this connection that the administration should be gradually taken over by the Axis. Hence Rahn's co-operation with the French Fascist groups must have seemed dangerous to the Italians, 73 since they were interested in undermining France's position in Tunisia, 74 and not in replacing one French régime by another.

At Italy's request⁷⁵ a joint conference was held at the Palazzo Chigi (January 2nd, 1943) on the question of Tunisia.⁷⁶ Germany was represented by von Bismarck and Dörtenbach of the Reich's Rome Embassy and by Möllhausen as Rahn's representative. The Italian side was composed of Vitetti heading a group of officials from the Foreign Ministry and a representative of the Italian Consul-General in Tunisia. In accordance with Weizsäcker's instructions,⁷⁷ the initiative was left to the Italians, who proposed the conference agenda. The question of the Axis relation to French rule in Tunisia was most elaborately discussed.

Weizsäcker instructed that Italy's position on this question should be accepted and that there should be agreement that 'the political and civil sectors remain under German-Italian influence', but with an essential reservation. He regarded it as 'decidedly reasonable' to utilise 'Rahn's and Silimbani's experience', i.e., to continue working with the extreme French collaborationists.

It was in that spirit that the viewpoints were reconciled at the Rome conference. The Italians agreed to co-operate with the French Fascists and promised to support Guilbaud. They had agreed even before the conference to the formation by Rahn of five French-Italian-Arab committees* charged with controlling the respective branches of the Tunisia administration. During the conversations the Italians advanced the proposition to overhaul the administrative apparatus by promoting Italians to top positions or to replace the

^{*} Mackensen's despatch, Rome, December 29th, 1942—2213/474694-5. These committees are discussed below, p. 293.

French completely by Italian officials. But the Germans regarded this as impossible as long as the military situation had not changed decisively in favour of the Axis. The administrative structure hence remained as it was.

On Arab questions, however, the Germans made considerably greater concessions to the Italians. And it is not accidental that their viewpoints on these matters corresponded to those of the French.

GERMAN PROPAGANDA IN THE MAGHREB

Before the Anglo-American landing in North Africa the Germans evinced practically no interest in the Maghreb Arabs. Very cautious propaganda bereft of nationalist accents which might evoke dissatisfaction in Madrid, Rome or Vichy, and the recruitment of agents—such were about the limit of German activity. But this attitude could not continue with the landing of General Eisenhower's troops. The mere fact that the propaganda was now directed to war zones or to areas in the direct rear of the Allied troops considerably increased the interest of German civil and military authorities in November and December 1942 in propaganda to the Maghreb. A special 'Propagandazug' (train) directed by Major Mehmnert⁷⁸ was sent to Tunisia. New propaganda directives were worked out by Dr. Megerle and the Algerian Consul Auer. 79 This constituted a great new propaganda effort, but the mode of thinking remained the same. The themes of the broadcasts or pamphlets did not go beyond the stereotyped Nazi attacks on the Allies, Jews, Bolsheviks, Freemasons and the Popular Front. Interesting from a political viewpoint are the limits the Germans imposed upon their propaganda. It was thus decided not to conduct long-range propaganda, to omit any reference to the future of North Africa, to be guided primarily by maintaining good relations with Italy and not to mention Italo-French controversy. All Allied declarations of national independence for the countries of the Maghreb were planned to be used in broadcasts to the French, while the Arabs were to be told that they were being deceived.80 The propaganda directives hence attest to the fact that the German rulers made no new political decisions on the future of the North African countries. At any rate, the Nazis did not intend to appeal to Arab nationalism in Tunisia, Algeria or Morocco. And the plans for the division of the Maghreb between Italy and France could hardly be considered suitable material for propaganda.*

^{*} See above regarding Italian claims to France's North African possessions. At the beginning of 1942 a general plan for the redivision of Africa between Germany, Italy, France, the Union of South Africa, Spain, and Portugal was drawn up by the German foreign ministry. (See Ł. Hirszowicz, *Hitlerowski plan*

Arabs should be told something positive about their countries' future. This question arose at a meeting of the 'Arab Committee' on propaganda. But it was decided that 'Spain's and France's territorial interests make it necessary to refrain from raising the question of the political future of the North African space.' The themes proposed at that meeting show that the main emphasis was to be on anti-American propaganda.⁸¹

A LETTER TO THE BEY

By agreement with the Axis chiefs the ex-Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin el-Huseini, sent a very restrained and cautious letter to the Bey of Tunis. It was sent from Rome, where the Mufti found himself during the Allied landing in North Africa. To some extent the letter was a result of the Mufti's conversation with some Italian officials on the question of the Maghreb. The Italians took official initiative in reassuring the Bey, not only because of fear of Allied propaganda, but also because they wanted to dissipate any hopes aroused among the Arabs by the arrival of German troops.

In the letter the Mufti expressed the Axis sympathy for the Arabs and promised to recognise the legal and political position of the Bey and his Government. He wrote that Germany and Italy understood the aspirations of the Tunisian nation, which wanted civil and religious freedom and economic progress. This was a very cautiously formulated promise not to change for the worse the conditions of the protectorate. The reference to civil and religious freedom and economic progress was certainly not a promise of independence. The letter further appealed for aid to the French troops fighting with the Axis against the enemy, whose victory would be a triumph for Jewry and Communism. In this manner the Bey was reminded of the war going on there and warned against opposing the French in Tunisia. The letter again attested to the Axis' double-faced position on Tunisia. 82

The letter was forwarded to the Bey through the Mufti's special emissary, who arrived in the city when it was seized by panic at the approach of the Allied troops. He returned at once to Italy.*

*Bismarck's despatch, Rome, November 20th, 1942—1246/337280; Mackensen's despatch, Rome, December 11th, 1942—975/303010-12. We managed to find in Wilhelmstrasse deeds only the Italian draft of the Mufti's letter to the Bey of Tunis. But the entire context indicates that the Germans could only have made small changes at best.

podzialu Afryki—Hitlerite Plan for the Division of Africa—Sprawy Międzynarodowe, no. 12/1961, pp. 90-97.)

THE MUFTI'S PROPOSITION

The Mufti left Rome for Berlin shortly after the Allied landing in Africa. On November 18th he submitted an elaborate memorandum to the High Command of the Wehrmacht* with a number of propositions concerning the utilisation of the North African Arabs in the Axis interest. This, he said, had not been possible previously because of the fear in Berlin and Rome that the French Government might go over to the Allies.

Hajj Amin proposed the following: (1) the occupation of Tunisia and the development there of a defence zone; (2) the formation of a Maghreb liberation army from war prisoners, Maghreb Arabs working in France, Tunisians, etc. (the Musti maintained that an army of half a million could thus be created); (3) calling upon the North African Arabs in the French Army and all Maghreb Arabs to join that liberation army; (4) stirring up tribal revolts in the Allies' rear; (5) directing that army to other fronts after conquering the Maghreb; (6) using the Axis Arab units in Tunisia; (7) setting up a secret centre in neutral Spanish Tetuan from which to establish contacts with various parts of the Maghreb.

These propositions fell on fertile soil. The German Command felt a serious shortage of manpower; but it is doubtful if they had sufficient equipment and adequate time to form a North African Arab army. However, a diversion in the rear of the Allied troops tying down substantial British, American and French forces seemed very desirable. This aspect of the Mufti's propositions was hence fully accepted by the German military. 'OKW regards it as unusually important to draw the North African Arabs into the fight against the Anglo-Saxon troops and to stir up rebellions', stated the OKW chief Keitel in a letter to Auswärtiges Amt.83 On December 8th Abwehr Colonel Lahousen approached Auswärtiges Amt personally on the matter.84 Next day there was a conference in the home of Haii Amin el-Huseini, attended by Admiral Canaris, Colonel Lahousen and Major Seubert of the Abwehr.85 The conference was devoted to the question of Arab uprisings in the Maghreb. On December 10th the Mufti was received by Weizsäcker.86 The propositions were finally presented to Hitler at his headquarters.

The Mufti's propositions involved important political implications for Auswärtiges Amt and the Führer's headquarters. In line with his policy of putting himself forward as the leader of all Arabs and the entire Islamic world, the Mufti had more than once approached the

^{*} Mufti memorandum to OKW, November 18th, 1942—975/303029-32. That document reached Auswärtiges Amt on December 1st, 1942.

Axis on Maghreb questions and often with concrete propositions. These proposals, maintained the Mufti, were meant to reconcile German and Axis policy in relation to the Vichy Government, with the desire to gain the support of the North African Arabs. It is obvious that the propositions could not be carried out. In his memorandum of November 18th the Mufti projected a number of political demands, maintaining that they were indispensable if the Axis were to acquire the necessary military advantages. He demanded a declaration, for instance, setting forth the precise Axis aims in the Arab countries of North Africa. The Axis was to recognise the freedom and independence of these countries and to promise to conclude treaties with them on the Anglo-Egyptian or Anglo-Iraqi model, i.e. treaties guaranteeing Axis war bases on the territories of the Maghreb states. In el-Huseini's opinion, it would be necessary to begin with Tunisia by releasing her nationalists from French prisons. To the Italians the Mufti proposed establishing with Tunisia relations based on the same principles as advanced by Sir Stafford Cripps in 1942 for Anglo-Indian relations⁸⁷ (which incidentally were rejected by the Indian National Congress).

As can be easily noted, the ex-Mufti did not depart basically from the viewpoint represented in the interwar years by moderate Arab nationalists; only, the roles of the parliamentary democracies England and France were to be taken over by Fascist Germany and Italy. In his plans the Arab countries of North Africa were to remain dependent countries, with the only difference that they could not be settled outright like the directly ruled Algeria, Libya or Palestine, for instance. But the Axis could not apply this method of imperial rule because of Italy's settlement plans and the position of France, bound by the interests of her *colons* in the Maghreb. England and France were, however, able to follow the indirect rule method in the Arab East.

Moreover, Nazi Germany herself on the one hand appeared as the advocate of the 'European Idea' and on the other as a pretender to a colonial empire of her own in Central Africa. Hence her interests on that continent were closely bound to those of France and Italy.

In the event of his political conditions being accepted, the Mufti wanted to go to North Africa to organise the activity he proposed. However, when he saw that the issue of the declaration he wanted met with difficulties, he reduced his demands to a secret letter addressed to the Bey of Tunis with some vague promises of independence. He even agreed to go to North Africa without any promises, though he pointed out that the results of his efforts would in that case be smaller.⁸⁸

GERMANY, ITALY AND THE MUFTI'S PLANS

It seems that the Germans were not unanimous in the evaluation of the Mufti's proposals. Without the co-operation of el-Huseini the Abwehr saw no possibility of stirring up Arab rebellions in the Allies' rear which the German Army wanted so much.⁸⁹ They therefore partly shared Hajj Amin's views inasmuch as he stressed the military value of the Maghreb Arabs. Rahn, on the other hand, was rather sceptical of the proposition to organise them into an army. 'A more active propaganda among the Arabs against the Jews or directly against the French is not desirable', he cabled from Tunis, 'since it can only lead to dangerous unrest. The Arabs have no fighting value.'90 He pointed out on another occasion that the formation of Arab units in the zones of Axis military bases and transloading points entailed the serious dangers of plundering, attacks on French and Italian settlers and of general unrest.⁹¹

Whether Berlin agreed with Rahn or not, it was at any rate considered that a simple declaration of concessions to Arab nationalism might lead to difficulties with the Italians and the French collaborationists. Thus, in conversations with the Abwehr Colonel Lahousen. the Wilhelmstrasse took a very cautious and to some extent even a negative viewpoint. Auswärtisges Amt expressed no reservations about using the Mufti in Tunisia, which the Italians favoured. They agreed that the military authorities should decide on the proper timing of his trip. But the Germans did not want to promise the Maghreb Arabs freedom and independence, since that would contradict Hitler's letter to Pétain and would have a negative effect on Spain.* But the Mufti's more modest proposal for a secret letter to the Bey of Tunis was immediately submitted to Casardi-first secretary of the Italian embassy-by Woermann with a request for his Government's opinion.⁹² The Mufti's conversation with Weizsäcker on December 10th brought no definite results. Weizsäcker maintained that the Germans were directing Tunisian affairs in complete agreement with the Italians.93 This time, too, Berlin communicated to Rome the Mufti's proposal that he was ready to proceed to Tunis even if his political conditions were not accepted. 94

On the same day the German note was a subject of conversation

On the same day the German note was a subject of conversation in Rome between d'Ajeta, Vitetti and Prince von Bismarck. It was disclosed on this occasion that the Italians were opposed to any kind

^{*}Woermann's note to Ribbentrop, Berlin, December 8th, 1942—975/303025-7. 'Spain to a greater extent than France has an *idée fixe* on the point of German intervention in its policy toward the natives', wrote Sonnenhol in his report from Casablanca on August 7th, 1942 (4739H/E233104-5).

of promises in a secret letter to the Bey of Tunis. The Italians considered that to issue a declaration of independence for the whole of North Africa was almost impossible, allegedly because of the Axis' obligations to Pétain. In so far as Tunisia was concerned, they stated, that involved part of Italy's living space and negotiations were required between Germany and Italy before any kind of declaration could be issued. In general, the Italian Foreign Office was of the opinion that there was no sense discussing with the Mufti the future of the French colonial empire. The next day d'Ajeta informed von Bismarck that, after acquainting himself with the contents of the despatch from the Italian Berlin Embassy, Mussolini had stated that that was not the suitable time for issuing such a declaration, since a discussion of problems which were so important to Italy and France must be left for later. 96

Hitler's headquarters surmised what Italy's reaction would be. Hitler told Keitel that complications with Italy were to be expected if the Mufti was sent to North Africa, and he reserved to himself final decision on the question. Canaris was then informed by Keitel by telephone (on December 9th or 10th) of the necessity, for the time being, of delaying the question of the Mufti organising rebellions in North Africa.⁹⁷ When the Mufti spoke to Weizsäcker the contents of that telephone conversation were known to Auswärtiges Amt.

On December 12th Rahn cabled from Tunis that it was premature for the Mufti to come to North Africa. He analysed the chances for an Arab uprising as being very small and indicated that the Mufti's presence would not help much.⁹⁸

On the same day Canaris informed Weizsäcker of Keitel's orders to halt the efforts to send the Mufti to North Africa until there was a political decision on the matter from the Führer's headquarters. In a note to Ribbentrop, Weizsäcker regarded the whole plan as unreal. The despatches from Rome of December 10th and 11th, in his opinion, proved the impossibility of issuing an Axis declaration on Tunisia.⁹⁹ He nevertheless proposed not to give up the idea of sending the Mufti to Tunis, and Ribbentrop agreed.¹⁰⁰

It was clear what kind of 'political decision' would be made on Tunisia in the prevailing situation. In the words of Canaris: 'In Tunisia the political initiative on the question of an Arab uprising should be left to the Italians'. ¹⁰¹ This could have been understood as a request to the Italians to take action, but Germany's ruling circles hardly counted on that.

The Mufti's trip to Berlin therefore yielded no results, and on December 19th, 1942, the Italians asked the Germans to agree for him to return to Rome.¹⁰²

ATTEMPTS AT AN UNDERSTANDING WITH BOURGUIBA

Rahn was probably right when he cabled to his superiors that the Mufti could not improve on the Axis ability to utilise the local Arabs. For the Tunisian Arabs had their own national centres, the most important of which was the *Néo-Destour* party. Founded in 1934 as an opposition to the traditionalism and passivity of the old Destour (in existence since 1920) the *Néo-Destour* party rapidly won the dominant position in the Tunisian national movement and acquired great popularity.

The most popular leaders of that party, headed by Habib Abu Raqiba (Bourguiba), were in French prisons. After the fall of the Popular Front Government in France and the defeat of the civil disobedience campaign in Tunisia (the high point of which was the April 9th, 1938, demonstration), the party leaders were arrested and tried by a military court. After the war broke out the Arab leaders were transferred to France and imprisoned in Marseilles. When German troops entered the unoccupied part of France in November 1942 it was planned in Berlin that the Tunisian prisoners would be taken over by the Italians, who were to occupy that part of France. 103 But, as is known, the Italian military never took Marseilles. On November 26th Rome asked the Germans to release the Néo-Destour leaders. 104 On December 8th Woermann sent a despatch to the Reich Ambassador in Paris recommending an understanding with the Commander-in-Chief of the Western Front (Rundstedt) on the release of the Néo-Destour leaders by the German occupation authorities. The release was to take place at once. 105 A week before that the Germans had released the nationalist leaders from the Tunisian prisons, and this had aroused such enthusiasm among the Arabs that Rahn insisted on the immediate release of the nationalists imprisoned in France and their return to Tunisia. 106

Berlin's request was met, but the Néo-Destour leaders were not returned to Tunisia, probably because of Italian opposition. They were not turned over to Italy either. The Sicherheitsdienst which freed Bourguiba and his companions probably wanted to make use of them themselves and did not agree to surrender them to the Italians. Disturbed by this turn of events, Rome, on December 19th, addressed a note to the German Foreign Ministry, 108 proposing a discussion of Tunisian questions. Among other things, the Italians proposed to establish Axis policy towards the North African Arabs, and to discuss particularly the question of the use of Néo-Destour. The Germans agreed to a discussion, 109 which meant that they gave up the idea of their independent use of the Néo-Destour leaders, and were ready to yield them to the Italians.

That is how Weizsäcker clarified the question in his instructions to the officials who were to represent Germany at the Rome conference on Tunisia.* He ordered the Italians to be informed that they were free to use the Néo-Destour leaders, but with the reservation that it would be good if they made use of Rahn's experience. The latter had in the first weeks of the Tunisian bridgehead expressed great expectations from the Néo-Destour.

During the discussion which touched on all matters relating to the Axis Tunisia policy, it turned out that Italy attached great weight to relations with the nationalists. Möllhausen expressed the conviction that it was necessary to exploit Bourguiba in order to please the Arabs, overcome their reluctance and draw them nearer to the Axis. The Italian representatives in turn pointed to the political problems which would result from pursuing that course. They referred to Mussolini's directives not to promise Tunisia independence under any circumstances and expressed the opinion that Bourguiba would agree on some sort of political activity only under the condition that his demands were met. And they made known their dissatisfaction that the nationalist leaders freed from French prisons were not turned over to Italy. The Germans retorted that the exploitation of these leaders was Italy's concern and promised to direct Bourguiba to Rome for conversations. 110

Several days later found the Néo-Destour leaders in Italy, where they were received with honour. Bourguiba and two colleagues—Ben Sliman and Ben Yusef—were put up in the Palazzo Respighi on the Tiber and the others at Albergo Continentale. But the conversations were without results. Bourguiba's condition for co-operation was the transfer of power to the Bey assisted by a nationalist government. This however was clearly contrary to Italy's short and long-term intentions in Tunisia.

It is highly doubtful whether Bourguiba, in general, wanted to cooperate with the Axis. He was certainly aware of Italy's ambitions. Before his arrest Bourguiba had advocated parliamentary democracy and opposed Fascist dictatorship. The situation on the war fronts at the time did not encourage co-operation with the Axis. There is no reason to assume that Bourguiba believed in an Axis victory at the end of 1942 and beginning of 1943. True, the Nazi anti-capitalist,

* Weizsäcker's instructions to the Rome Embassy, Berlin, January 2nd, 1943—2213/474697. Another part of these instructions was discussed above, p. 283.

† Bourguiba addressed a letter to the Mufti on January 20th, 1943, informing him of his conversations with the Italians. Different versions of this letter were published by *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde*, and *La Dépêche Tunisienne*. But whatever Bourguiba wrote to Hajj Amin then, one thing is certain—despite the different versions of his letter, Bourguiba could not have thought that the Italians would find it easy to meet his demands.

anti-Jewish demagogy found a responsible chord among the rank-and-file radical Tunisian nationalists, followers of Néo-Destour, especially among the youth. But the decisive forces, such as the Bey and his circle, for instance, expected an Allied victory and refrained from committing themselves on either side. After the war some French circles accused Bourguiba of having collaborated with the Axis. The Tunisians at that time published a letter from Bourguiba to the eminent Néo-Destour leader, Dr. Thamer, of August 8th, 1942.¹¹³ Bourguiba wrote that an Allied victory was certain and called for their unconditional support. Though we cannot vouch for the authenticity of that letter, Bourguiba's attitude during the Axis occupation of Tunisia leaves no grounds for assuming any contradiction between the views of the letter and those he held then.

Bourguiba then refused to work for the Axis unless his political conditions were met, and he asked to be returned to Tunisia. The silence and absence from the country of a leader of his stature was bound to affect the situation, and his followers began to act with greater reserve toward the Axis.* It became clear to the Italians by the end of January that they were following a blind alley in their relations with the Tunisian nationalists, and they began to consider sending Bourguiba to Tunisia. ¹¹⁴ To do so would, after all, be in accordance with their political line not to give the Arabs any promises, but to show them sympathy and tolerate nationalist activity undermining the authority of the French administration. But, as may be concluded from Wilhelmstrasse documents, some Italian politicians thought that Bourguiba should be kept in Rome for as long as he failed to agree to comply with Axis wishes, or at least until he made the public declaration requested from him.†

THE AXIS AND TUNISIAN NATIONALISTS

In the meantime co-operation developed in Tunisia between the German occupation authorities and the French collaborationists; while the Arab nationalists acquired a certain freedom of action. But no concrete obligations were undertaken towards the one or the

^{*} Thus Möllhausen complained that because of Bourguiba's absence a certain opposition was developing in the editorial office of *Ifriqiya el-Fatat* (Möllhausen to AA, February 21st 1943—1276/343249); on February 1st 1943, Rahn cabled to AA: 'Responsibility for his absence is placed on the Italians and his silence is universally regarded as proof that it will be impossible to reach an understanding with Italy' (1276/343252-3)).

[†] Möllhausen to AA, February 22nd, 1943—1276/343252–3. This is a report of Möllhausen's conversation with Lieutenant-Colonel Simmen, a liaison officer of the Italian intelligence at Palazzo Chigi.

other. The Arab nationalists took advantage of the weakened state of the French administration and its reluctance to resort to repression against them and revived their activity. The presence of German troops who posed as friends of the Arabs aroused new hopes. And when Arab soldiers appeared in Tunisia—either the members of the OKW special tasks regiment Brandenburg or of the Deutsch-arabische Lehrabteilung—the nationalist mood was greatly stimulated. Even the moderate elements grouped around the Bey and his palace began to urge some change.

The only change the Germans introduced was the formation of the commissions for control of the French administration. Each of the five commissions was composed of one Arab, one Frenchman and one Italian. The scope of their authority was not concretely defined, but they facilitated the German play on the contradictions between various groups of the Tunisian population, which led to rivalry among the leaders of each nationality for the occupation authorities' favour.* The commissions concerned themselves with anti-aircraft defence and care for refugees, the general administration of the city, public works, the food supply, economic problems and public order. The seeming equal rights of the Arab members of the commissions were widely used by Axis propaganda. 115 The equality was spurious, since the Italian Consul-General had direct access to the German occupation authorities just like the representatives of the Residency-General or the CUAR. 116 Further propaganda trumps were the anti-Jewish policy and the assignment of the newspaper Ifrigiya el-Fatat (Young Africa) to the Néo-Destour. 117 This did not amount to much, however, but when the Germans wanted to exploit more widely nationalist slogans in their propaganda they met with Italian resistance.118

Although the Germans did not allow constitutional changes during the war, and though Rahn was personally rather inclined to give priority to co-operation with the French, the idea of using the nationalists was not given up. Rahn explained to the Arabs, particularly to the young militants of the Néo-Destour party, that independence was not handed down on a silver platter, which could only mean incitement to nationalist activity while undertaking no obligations.

Such an attitude ran true to the essence of German policy of playing everybody against everybody else. The Bey's demands upon the Residency were to be reduced to a minimum. This was not difficult to accomplish, since the Bey himself did not want to advance

* 'By utilising the French-Arab antagonisms the Germans caused both sides to make greater efforts in the field of military co-operation', wrote Rahn in his despatch of February 2nd, 1943—1276/343 325-7.

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far-reaching demands in the prevailing military situation.* The Germans wanted to direct against the Allies the energy and impatience of the militant nationalist youth. By pointing to the possibility of nationalist activity they also deepened the old antagonism between the palace—which claimed to be the only spokesman for the nation—and Néo-Destour, the party which gained wide popularity precisely because it directed political activity independently of the Bey's palace. With this stratagem the Germans hoped to demonstrate their sympathies with the Arabs, for they were concerned with winning the popular support so necessary for the war effort. They even tried to exploit for their ends the people's disappointment at the silence of Habib Bourguiba and his absence from Tunisia. 119 In general, the Germans attempted to create a situation in which each population group felt the pressure of some other group and each sought support from the occupation authorities.

REVIVAL OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

It was therefore Nazi strategy to make use of Arab nationalism in the fight against the enemy and at the same time to keep the French administration in power as a support for the German occupation régime and locum tenens for the would-be Italian protectorate. There was nevertheless a revival of the national movement. The French administration was weakened and the Axis had to reckon with the mood prevailing in the Arab countries, particularly in Algeria and Morocco. This enabled the Tunisian nationalists to carry on wide agitation for expanding the powers of the Bey and for the formation of a Tunisian Government composed of representative Arab personalities. 120 Towards the end of 1942 the Bey resolved to dismiss three members of the Government and to replace them by three others. The new appointees were to represent Tunisia's main political groupings. 121 The following candidacies soon crystallised: Premier— Muhammed Chenik, wealthy landowner and president of the North African Chamber of Commerce, leader of the old Destour; Minister of Justice-Saleh Farhat, lawyer and one of the top leaders of the old Destour; Minister of Internal Affairs-Dr. Materi, physician, one of the founders of the Néo-Destour and its first President, who resigned in 1938 because of a misunderstanding with the party's general secretary, Habib Bourguiba. 122 After reconstructing the

^{*} See, for instance, Nevil Barbour, A Survey of North Africa, London, 1959, p. 301. The Germans exploited this circumstance. Thus, when they considered that the Bey wanted too much, they argued that elimination of the French protectorate by the Axis might lead to an Allied declaration of war and bombardment of the Bey's residence (Rahn to AA, January 23rd, 1943—1276/343217-24).

Cabinet the Bey demanded that the new Minister of Internal Affairs be vested with real power, namely, to take over native administration, the police and the health service. Admiral Estéva agreed on the reconstruction of the Cabinet and accepted the Bey's demand on the native administration and health service. But he rejected—with Axis support—the demand to turn over internal security to Dr. Materi. At the end of January the Bey entrusted the administration of the Waqfs to his Minister without the agreement of the Axis officials. Until then these Muslim foundations had been administered by a commission which included a French official. 124

These measures from above changed the true balance of forces in the country to a very small degree—the Axis continued to act in general as defender of the status quo. The changes nevertheless evoked a wide reaction among the Arab population. From the moment the Bey selected a few nationalist leaders as Ministers, the commander of the German field military police in Sfax reported to Major Seubert of the Abwehr, the national movement was rejuvenated in Sfax and its environs: the Néo-Destour party reconstituted itself and opened clubrooms; a party enrolment was started: militants canvassed the villages to recruit members; many meetings were held, some open to the public. The leaders of the movement and their agents wore red armbands with a red on blue crescent on their sleeves, or red scarves. They meddled in all kinds of administrative matters, particularly in questions of the food supply. They did not conceal their animosity to the authorities over whom they wanted to exercise control and prevent alleged injustices. Their political interventions and manifestations constituted disturbances of public order. There were cases where the Arabs refused to sell food to Frenchmen.125 It is clear that the German military police did not relish the nationalist activity.

The clash between the local Arab population and the French police at Ksur es-Saf on March 20th–23rd, 1943,¹²⁶ was not accidental. Nor was the German and Italian behaviour. The Germans, particularly the S.S., supported the French, whereas the Italians defended the Arab perpetrators of the riots in order to undermine the authority of the French police and officials. It sometimes even came to direct clashes between Arabs and the German authorities. For instance, Arab employees struck at one of the airfields, probably in protest against rough treatment by the military.¹²⁷

THE AXIS AND THE BEY'S COURT

Concerned with maintaining the sympathy or at least the friendly neutrality of the Arabs and with the functioning of the French

administration, the Germans tried to avoid open interference in constitutional controversies. ¹²⁸ Open intervention would have spoiled their delicate political game and would have confirmed French and Arab suspicions of binding German promises to Italy on the question of Tunisia.* Thus when at the end of February the Bey tried to compel the nomination of four additional Arab ministers the Germans were put in a difficult position, for in this demand on the Residency-General the Bey counted on German support. ¹²⁹ The Néo-Destour leaders and Admiral Estéva tried to influence the Germans to take an official position on the matter. The Germans reacted differently to the former than to the latter. Möllhausen unofficially informed the Resident of the Axis negative attitude to the Arabs' demand, Estéva rejected them¹³⁰ and the Bey retreated.

The Bey found himself in a delicate situation. In his desire to expand his power and to remain top man in Arab Tunisia he had to reckon with all the dangers inherent in a war situation. Chief among the dangers were Italy's claims and the changes she might force in her favour. Italy's stepped-up political activity compelled the Bey to seek support to some extent in the French Residency. Such was the situation when the envoy Bombieri arrived in Tunisia on February 17th, 1943, as representative of the Italian Foreign ministry. Italy's previous representative, Consul-General Silimbani, had been dismissed.¹³¹ Bombieri was not a stranger in Tunisia. He had been Consul-General there in the 1930s, when he had tried to facilitate Italian expansion.¹³² His arrival therefore aroused apprehension in Arab circles. 133 The Bey thought it desirable, under the circumstances, to strengthen his position. Thus, in a conversation with Estéva on February 20th, the Bey justified his demands with the argument that the Italians might confront them with some accomplished facts, and it would therefore be better if the administration were in the hands of responsible Tunisian officials. 134 It is obvious that this was not a suitable argument for the Admiral, since it was based on the assumption that French rule would in any case be abolished, but to the Italians the Bey stressed his fidelity to the French protectorate treaty. When Bombieri visited the Bey (March 7th) without the intermediation of the French Residency as provided by the treaty, the Bey insisted that he was bound by that treaty.135

True, the Bey's standpoint was not shared by his entire entourage. According to Rahn's reports and Admiral Estéva's evidence before the Lyons court, the Bey's son, Prince Rauf (married to an Italian), strongly sympathised with the Axis and wanted to join the German

^{*} This is how Rahn justified his opposition to the demand that Germany and Italy should be required to consent to every change in the Tunisian administration and set-up (Rahn to AA, February 2nd, 1943—1276/343235-7).

army.¹³⁶ It is also true that the Bey only made timid efforts to strengthen his power, hoping to avoid making a clear declaration for the Axis while preventing the improvement of Italy's position. There is no doubt that from the time he assumed the throne (June 1942) the Bey continued the tradition of his father, Muhammed en-Naser-bey, who had nationalist sympathies, ¹³⁷ and also supported nationalist demands. And it seems that this was the reason for the dethronement of el-Munsef-bey by General Giraud when the Allies occupied Tunisia.¹³⁸ The charge of collaboration made against the Bey at that time was rather tactical. True, he had no thought of helping the Allies or of resisting the Axis, but the main centre of collaboration in Tunisia was not the court.

BOURGUIBA'S RETURN

The Nazis' highly contradictory position of aiming to retain the Arabs' sympathy while refraining from supporting their national demands, and in fact working to maintain the French administration, found expression in the following incident. During the high point of the nationalist agitation at the end of January 1943, Rahn opposed Bourguiba's return to Tunisia¹³⁹ out of fear of internal complications. This was at the time when Italy (as mentioned above) was considering the return of the Néo-Destour leaders to Tunisia. This extreme position of Dr. Rahn was inconvenient to Auswärtiges Amt, 141 since the question of Bourguiba was probably regarded in connection with the totality of the relations between the Reich and the Arab leaders. Rahn was summoned to Berlin. 142 Certain Italian circles who wanted to detain Bourguiba in Italy until he acceded to the Axis's desires 143 took advantage of Rahn's viewpoint.

This only resulted in delaying the return of the Néo-Destour leaders. At the end of February Rome and Berlin agreed in principle that they should return¹⁴⁴ and Rahn went to Rome to arrange the matter. The plan to send the Mufti¹⁴⁵ along with Bourguiba, which had a certain political significance from a nationalist viewpoint, was never realised. The Germans no longer expected much from the Néo-Destour leaders, since Bourguiba's long absence and silence were too eloquent.¹⁴⁶ If, under these circumstances, the Néo-Destour chiefs were to come to Tunisia together with the Mufti, the matter would naturally assume great importance and would inevitably result in a great propaganda campaign. This in turn would lead to sharpened attacks on the French administration and threaten public order—which the Germans were anxious to prevent. The return of Bourguiba, Möllhausen told Colonel Simmen of Italian intelligence, was only

necessary to assure the Axis at least the moderate sympathy of the Arab population, for this involved the Arabs' invaluable economic contributions, an increase in the number of Arab labourers and of volunteers for the Axis units.¹⁴⁷

On February 26th an Italian plane brought to Tunis six Néo-Destour leaders: Ali Belkhuan, Mongi Slim, Sliman Ben Sliman, Mahmud Bourguiba (Habib's brother), Beshir Ben Yusef and Muhammed Mezig. 148 Somewhat later one of the most prominent Néo-Destour chiefs returned, Saleh Ben Yusef, who was later to become Bourguiba's opponent. Habib himself returned on April 9th, after broadcasting an innocuous speech over Radio Rome on April 6th. 149 At the end of March other Néo-Destour members were conveyed from Southern France to Italy. 150 They had lived in Southern France as private individuals after their release from prison. When the Axis forces were driven out of Tunisia the Néo-Destour, under Bourguiba's influence, declared itself for the Allies. At that time the French rulers did not charge them with collaboration.

THE WEHRMACHT'S ARAB SOLDIERS

An important aspect of the Germans' Tunisia policy was the utilisation of Arabs in the war operations. But they were not able to do much in this respect because of the decision to leave to the Italians 'initiative on the question of Arab uprisings'. This, however, did not exclude the organisation of more modest actions, particularly within the framework of the Abwehr.

Shortly after the Tunisian bridgehead had been established 800 men of the 'Koenen' detachment of the OKW Brandenburg regiment for special tasks were sent there. These were 'trained and ready to execute all the special military tasks belonging to the sphere of Abwehr activity (sabotage, diversive action at the enemy's supply lines and in his rear)'. A special unit of 'Abwehr II' was sent to Tunisia for the purpose of conducting sabotage and breaking down the enemy morale. Operations in the Allies' rear were also carried out from bases in Spanish North Africa. Arab members of regular German units or local Arabs participated in these actions, but there were not many of them.

The Germans intended to form regular Arab fighting units in North Africa and these might have played an important political and propaganda role. Among other things, such units would have made it difficult for the Allies to use native detachments—which constituted a considerable part of the French troops fighting under Eisenhower. Such Arab formations would evoke a wide response also among the Arabs in the Allied rear in Algeria and Morocco.

It was technically possible to form a few such units. An aid in this could have been the 'Deutsch-arabische Lehrabteilung', which at the time of the Anglo-American Africa invasion was stationed at Stalino on the Soviet front as part of the 'Generalkommando 68 z.b.V.' It was decided to transfer it to Tunisia as a nucleus for recruiting Arab volunteers, but the use of DAL as an instrument of Reich Arab policy roused serious apprehensions among the Italians.¹⁵³

The Italians were interested to know whether DAL would, in general, be sent to Tunisia, and if so whether it would operate as a separate Arab detachment or as part of the German Army. They asked, too, if the German Government intended to make it public that Arab units were fighting in Tunisia, 154 and if they planned to avail themselves of that fact in propaganda. It is obvious that it would have been much more effective from a German viewpoint to separate Arab units and to give wide publicity to their fighting side by side with the Axis forces. In fact, the Germans first wanted to use this in their propaganda and planned to organise a festive meeting between the Mufti, Rashid Ali and DAL on the way to the Tunisian front. That meeting was supposed to take place in Vienna, 155 and the two Arab leaders intended on that occasion to issue a manifesto to the Maghreb Arabs. 156

In this case, too, the Germans had to give up their plans because of their Italian ally. It was explained to Rome that DAL would operate in Tunisia as part of the German Army and that it would be moved there without publicity.¹⁵⁷

The details of the transfer of DAL to Tunisia and its functions there were also discussed in Rome on January 2nd, 1943. Officials from the Foreign Ministries of both powers participated in the conversations as well as the deputy German military attaché in Rome and General Amé of Comando Supremo. It was agreed to fly DAL to Tunisia over a period of three weeks. It was planned to start a recruiting campaign upon DAL's arrival among the Tunisian Arabs.¹⁵⁸

ARAB RECRUITMENT IN TUNISIA

An order was issued one week later (January 9th) by the Quarter-master-General of the Fifth German Armoured Army on the military service of Tunisian Arabs.¹⁵⁹ According to this document, the German Command intended to make wider use of Arabs in the war and it therefore proposed to embrace in its plan of action all Arabs fit either to fight or for labour. Those willing to work were to be employed in building fortifications. Those desiring to join the

fighting forces were to be assigned by all commands, including that of prison camps, to special 'assembly points for Arab soldiers'. There they were supposed to be taken care of by a detachment of the Brandenburg regiment, and trained at the Hammamet citadel. They were to be fitted out with captured French uniforms and wear armbands with the inscription 'Im Dienste der Deutschen Wehrmacht' (In the service of the German Army). This was to distinguish them from DAL soldiers, who wore German uniforms and the inscription 'Frei Arabien' 160 (Free Arabia). The soldiers were to get 10 francs per day, lower non-commissioned officers 15 francs, and sergeants 20 francs. Recruitment began on January 10th, 1943, and 132 officers, N.C.O.'s and soldiers mobilised by the French military mission in the attempt to organise an African phalanx, were transferred to these Arab units on February 13th. 161

Few Arabs volunteered for the fighting units. The Germans at first counted on 600 men. ¹⁶² DAL and the other Arab units played a small role at the front and the Germans were not satisfied with their morale. When Colonel Meyer-Ricks, experienced in leading these units, was killed at the front it was decided to withdraw them from North Africa. ¹⁶³

GERMAN EXPECTATIONS IN TUNISIA

The impression cannot be avoided that the German decision-makers in Tunisia (at least in November/December 1942 and partly in January 1943, when policies were decided) had no idea how close the Axis was to catastrophe in North Africa—or at least acted as if they had not. Thus at a conference with the Military Command early in January 1943 Hitler expressed the conviction that the Axis would not only maintain their positions on the Tunisian bridgehead but would develop a counter-offensive to the west, 164, i.e. towards Algeria and Morocco. Admiral Assmann called attention to Hitler's position: 'Underestimating the opponents' forces', he wrote, 'he clung sometimes to the illusion that we will be able to drive the enemy from African soil.' Rommel accused Kesselring of assessing too optimistically the Axis possibilities in North Africa.*

The matter did not stop at hopes and opinions. The fact is that after the establishment of the Tunisian bridgehead considerable German and Italian forces were concentrated there and were steadily

^{*} E. Rommel, Krieg ohne Hass (War without Hate), op. cit., p. 372. See also Rommel's notes on his conversation with Hitler of March 10th, 1943 (loc. cit.). Kesselring expresses the opinion in his book that the African campaign could have been conducted for a much longer time (A. Kesselring, Gedanken zum zweiten Weltkrieg—Reflections on World War II—Bonn, 1955, p. 99).

supplied with the latest weapons. The flying of men and equipment was widely resorted to for that purpose. Rommel emphasised the enormous effort put into supplying the Axis forces in Tunisia and maintained that the provisioning of the troops was much better than during the Afrika Korps battles in the Western Desert. 166 How much the Nazi leaders hoped for from the Tunisia front is indicated by the fact that troops and war material were shipped by plane at a time when efforts were made to supply by air von Paulus's troops encircled at Stalingrad. It must be noted that the Axis troops in Tunisia were still being reinforced by the middle of April and that the decision to withdraw was made very late. It was at any rate already clear then that it would be impossible to evacuate the overwhelming majority of the soldiers. 167 Under the circumstances, the preparations to evacuate the German and Italian military missions were, according to Ribbentrop's directives, to be kept secret from the mass of soldiers,* who were to be left to fate.

The course of the operations in the first months of the Tunisian bridgehead created optimistic illusions as to the further development of the North African campaign. For the fighting did not indicate any immediate and unequivocal Allied superiority.

WAR OPERATIONS

The element of surprise, which so greatly contributed to the success of the Anglo-American landing in North Africa,† was now lacking. When the Allied army attacked Tunisia from Algeria the Axis forces were already there. At the end of November there were 15,000 of them with aircraft superiority. The Allies at first decided to launch a direct attack on Tunis and Bizerta. After some preparatory measures the offensive in the direction of the northern coast started on November 25th, 1942. In a few days the British, American and French troops reached within a dozen or so kilometres of Tunis, occupying Mateur, Djedeida and Tebourba. By November 27th the Allied offensive was halted by a counter-attack of German land forces supported from the air. On December 4th the Axis counter-offensive was stopped in turn.

The Allied Command now changed tactics and attempted to conquer Tunis by an encircling manoeuvre from the south and by

* Ribbentrop to Hencke, Sonderzug, May 3rd, 1943—975/302989-90. Hencke replaced Woermann in Auswärtiges Amt.

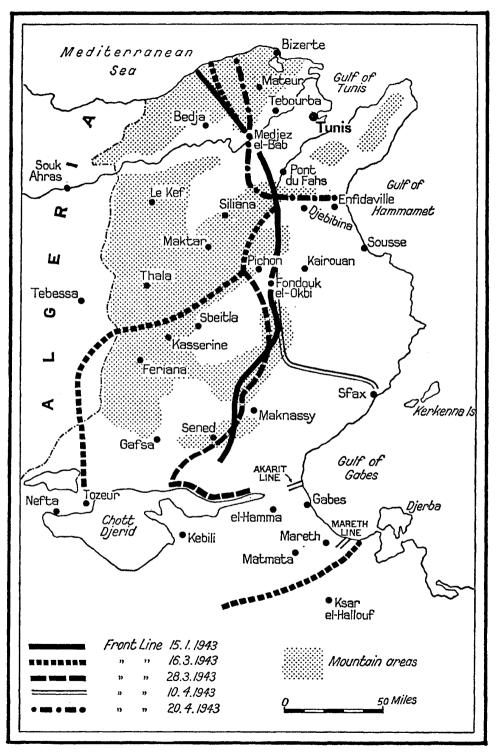
† U. Cavallero (Comando Supremo, op. cit., pp. 371-7) cites overhearing on November 6th, 1942, a telephone conversation between Goering and Kesselring which indicated that the Germans were not entirely clear just where the Allies would land.

dominating the mountains which defended access to the coastal plain. The December fighting resulted in Allied control of the most important mountain passes. By the middle of January 1943 the Allies were deep in Tunisian territory. They held a front in the shape of an arc convex in the eastern direction, leaning in the north on the coast at Tamera (about 60 kilometres west of Bizerta) and on the South on the Gafsa-Gabes road, with Lake Chott-Djerid on the right flank. The Allies, were, however, unable to attain any important strategic aim in Tunisia. What is more, Field-Marshal Rommel's troops were approaching from the east, yielding under the pressure of Montgomery's Eighth Army. So that the Allies faced the danger of the joining of General Arnim's and Rommel's forces in Tunisia.

On January 19th General Arnim's forces—including strong armoured units—attacked the Allies from Tunis in a southerly and south-easterly direction. Despite strong resistance, the Allied troops were dislodged from many of the positions they had won on the mountain ridges. At the same time three German divisions, one of them armoured, disembarked at Sfax despite strong Allied air attacks. And Rommel occupied fortified positions on the Mareth line extending between the sea and the Matmata Massif. This line defended the entrance to Tunis from the south and east, and was built by the French to ward off a possible Italian attack from Libya. Occupied by Rommel's forces, this line now protected Tunisia from the Eighth Army. This stronghold was now expected to allow the collaboration of Rommel in the south with Arnim in the north against the Allied forces pressing from the west. 169

Rommel's armoured formations opened an offensive on January 31st against the Allied position at the Faid Pass, held by inexperienced American forces. After consolidating on this pass, Rommel launched, on February 14th, a broad offensive against the U.S. armoured units. Von Arnim opened an attack at the same time in order to tie down the Allied forces and he scored some local gains. Rommel's attack brought the Axis important (though temporary) gains, for the Allied forces were pushed back far to the west, beyond the Algerian border, and in the north to the towns Thala and Sbiba, and the enemy was halted only by a British counterattack on February 21st–23rd. As a result of these operations the Axis considerably expanded their Tunisian bridgehead, with the Allies controlling only the northwestern part of the country.

Rommel renewed the attack on March 6th, this time against his old opponent General Montgomery. The Axis met with a serious defeat in this offensive, losing a large part of their tanks, and an Allied offensive followed by mid-March. Besides directing a frontal attack on the Mareth line, part of Montgomery's forces executed a



Tunisia—military operations, 1942-3.

manoeuvre outflanking the Matmata Massif from the south and west, while the Americans, co-operating with the Eighth Army, launched an attack in the direction of Gafsa and Maknassy. The first phase of the Allied offensive ended successfully on March 28th. The Mareth line was forced, British troops entered the coastal city of Gabes, and the Americans regained the positions held before Rommel's February offensive, and even expanded somewhat.

The next phase of the offensive (April 8th-10th) brought the Allies further victories. Besides the Eighth Army, American, British and French units of General Eisenhower's command took part in this phase. In the last week of February the British General Alexander took command of the entire front; while Rommel was in Europe from March 10th onwards and General von Arnim commanded all Axis forces in Tunisia. The Eighth Army broke through the fortified positions between Lake Chott and the sea (the so-called Akarit line) and took Sfax. In the west the Eighth Army linked up with American forces attacking in the Gafsa-Gabes direction. At the same time French and British forces operating on the central and northern sectors of the front improved their positions in the mountain area, which soon became the take-off point for the third phase of the Allied offensive.

In this phase (April 10th–20th) the offensive was conducted on all sectors and resulted in the Axis forces being pressed into a small territory around Tunis and Bizerta.¹⁷⁰

LAST DAYS OF THE AXIS OCCUPATION

Under the circumstances, the broader political problems here naturally had to be relegated to the background. No political steps were taken by the nationalists, although they were greatly reinforced on the eve of the last phase of the Allied offensive by the return of Bourguiba and the other Néo-Destour leaders. ¹⁷¹ At the moment it was to the interest of all political forces to remain calm: Néo-Destour, the court, the Axis representatives and the French administration. On the Resident's proposal, the Bey on April 8th decorated a number of German and Italian military and diplomatic representatives with high Tunisian orders.* As mentioned above, a French volunteer legion of 220 men left for the front early in April.

Even in this situation there were incidents indicating political

^{*}Le Lieutenant-Colonel Aviateur Christian du Jonchay à M. Pierre Laval, Chef du Gouvernement, Tunis, April 9th, 1943—1304/346276-9; Rahn (op. cit., p. 216) recalls the award of medals only to Germans. He calls that action 'a spontaneous gesture, not dictated by any practical consideration' on the part of the Bey.

rivalry and mutual suspicion between Germany and Italy. The Italian Government, for instance, was seriously disturbed by the plan to proclaim the Bey as King of Tunisia (mid-April) and his son, Prince Rauf, as successor to the throne. According to the envoy Bombieri's report to Rome, Rahn was supposed to have made that proposal. The Italians evidently feared that with nothing to lose in the final phase of the battle for Tunis, Germany wanted to show the Arabs her generosity.¹⁷² These fears were groundless, however; they were based on Rahn's joking remarks in a conversation with Bombieri. 173 As in the past, the Germans were interested primarily in co-operating with the French administration to maintain internal order, for the Allied offensive required increased military exertions from the Reich. By agreement with von Arnim, Rahn on April 12th mobilised the inhabitants for compulsory labour on the fortifications. 174 German soldiers who were not at the front worked alongside mobilised Frenchmen.¹⁷⁵ Realising the unpopularity of the mobilisation measure, the Germans in this case, too, relied on Admiral Estéva's authority and availed themselves of the help of the collaborationists.*

On April 1st, 1943, the German authorities decided that all Frenchmen who faithfully served the Axis should be evacuated to France. Rahn reported to his superiors on the 17th that the majority of the Frenchmen and Arabs who could be charged with collaboration had already left Tunis. The Germans were first of all concerned with removing Admiral Estéva, the Resident-General, from Tunisia. They did not want him to fall into the Allies' hands. For they feared that this sole Vichy representative in North Africa, who to the end remained loyal to Pétain, would begin an entirely different game after an Allied victory. 178

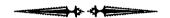
The final phase of the Allied offensive started on April 22nd. On May 3rd the Americans took Bizerta, on the 7th the English entered Tunis and the French took Pont du Fahs, a strategic point for which heavy battles were conducted throughout the Tunisian campaign. On that day Estéva was deported from Tunisia by force¹⁷⁹ and Rahn moved to General Arnim's headquarters. On May 11th Rahn left Tunisia¹⁸⁰ and von Arnim was captured. The plan to whisk the Bey off to Italy had to be abandoned.¹⁸¹ The last Axis units surrendered on May 13th. The Allies captured a quarter of a million soldiers, half of whom were Germans.¹⁸² An important stage of World War II came to an end. The road was opened for the invasion of Italy.

While the battle was raging in Tunisia the Soviet Army encircled

^{*} Rahn to AA, April 12th, 1943—1276/343303-4; Rahn to AA, April 12th, 1943—1276/343308-9. Rahn was of the opinion that in return for those services the war-prisoner relatives of the collaborationists should be released or put to work as 'free' labourers.

and liquidated the army of Field-Marshal von Paulus (February 2nd, 1943) on the Volga. The Wehrmacht received a blow from which it never recovered. By the summer of 1943 it was not the Germans but the Soviet Union, the U.S.A. and Great Britain who had assumed the initiative and were pressing ahead.

CONCLUSION



THE ARAB LANDS AND EXILES IN 1943

HE defeat in Tunisia completely changed Germany's position in the Arab world. Not a single Arab country now remained within the sphere of influence of the Germans or their satellites and allies. The strength of the anti-Fascist coalition precluded the possibility of German troops ever again standing on the south-eastern or southern shores of the Mediterranean. The Nazis were forced on the defensive, first in the conquered European countries and later in the Reich itself. They were compelled to change their propaganda slogans: instead of the 'new order' and plans for the division of empires on other continents, they now wrote about 'Festung Europa', i.e. about the defence of Europe threatened by an invasion of Asiatic barbarians and their Western decadent allies.

Political initiative in the eastern Arab countries—from Libya to Iraq, from Syria to Aden—was assumed by Great Britain. In 1942 an alliance began to emerge between an important part of the Zionist movement and the U.S.A. American oil companies strengthened their positions in Saudi Arabia. Soviet troops were in Iran, besides the British and Americans. The situation in the Middle East was no longer shaped by the conflict between the Fascist camp and their opponents. A new period commenced when political developments in this region were more and more determined by the contradictions among the Anglo-Saxon powers and between them and the Soviet Union.

In the new situation the British initiated attempts to create an Arab bloc aimed politically and militarily against the Soviet Union and economically against the United States. British statesmen in London and Cairo projected a moderate Pan-Arabist programme in an effort to win the support of the Arab ruling circles. But in distinction to the World War I period, Britain's Arab policy now pertained not only to the lands of the Fertile Crescent but also to Egypt. The Arab League arose in 1945 as a result of these efforts, which were supported by leading Arab politicians.

CONCLUSION

By 1943 Arab politicians who had been sympathetic to the Axis broke with the watchful waiting policy and began to throw in their lot with the Allies. Early that year Iraq declared war against the Axis, and Egypt followed two years later. In Palestine the moderate Arab politicians began to organise their forces, although the British authorities did not fully support them, against the Huseini clan. In Syria and Lebanon the English supported the anti-French politicians and groupings. It was basically their intervention in 1943 and 1945 that ended French rule in those countries. It was with British agreement that Nuri es-Said, Emir Abd Allah and later the Egyptian Premier, Mustafa en-Nahhas-pasha, worked towards an organisation of Arab states.

There was at the same time a cooling-off of relations between the Arab leaders in exile and the Germans. Prüfer, the former Reich Ambassador to Brazil, who at the turn of 1942/3 took over responsibility for contact with Arab politicians, reported in June 1943 a state of depression among orientals living in Switzerland because of the Axis defeat in Africa. Abbas Hilmi, the former Khedive of Egypt, was critical to Prüfer of German policy in North Africa and Syria. Shekib Arslan and Aziz Izzet-Pasha—an Egyptian politician very close to the royal family—expressed the opinion that only a German-Soviet understanding against the Anglo-Saxons could improve Germany's position. Adel Arslan refused to go when invited to Germany at the end of 1942.2 The German Ambassador at Ankara reported³ that he refused the invitation because of his opposition to the activities of the Mufti and el-Kilani.* He was pessimistic about the Axis military and political situation. It was further reported from Ankara that Adel Arslan was in contact with the Allies, and was seen more and more often with his Polish friends. What is more, he also met with officials of the British Consulate-General in

But the most outstanding Arab leaders living in Europe, Hajj Amin el-Huseini and Rashid Ali el-Kilani, had committed themselves too heavily to Nazi Germany to be able to alter their standpoint. Nor is there any evidence that they wanted to do so. As far as the ex-Mufti was concerned, German documents attest to his wide activity in 1943–4. It can be assumed that the Mufti's adherents were active among the *émigrés* trying to counteract their chief's loss of influence. At the same time the situation of the Arab exiles in neutral countries became ever more difficult. With the changed situation on the war fronts the Turkish Government began to modify its position. In September 1943 the Turkish police arrested Ishaq Derwish,⁴ the

^{*} Emir Adel Arslan expressed this view even earlier. (See Dr. Allardt to Grobba, Tarabya, October 15th, 1942—992/304437-39.)

CONCLUSION

Mufti's confidential agent, immediately after the landing of Allied troops on the Apennine Peninsula. In October he was ordered to leave the country. Many other Arab emigrants were expelled at that time, but the Turkish authorities did not apply such measures to everyone.* The Swiss began to make it difficult for Shekib Arslan and to limit his freedom of movement.⁵

After the Tunisia defeat the Germans by agreement with the Arab politicians, especially the Mufti, limited themselves to two fields of activity: propaganda and the organisation of Arab military units. For after the collapse in North Africa the Nazis had to content themselves with propaganda at a distance, by radio. The spreading of pamphlets from the air was difficult and necessitated prior preparation. Arab units were no longer organised with the idea of being used in the Arab lands. They were now assigned secondary tasks within the Wehrmacht.

THE QUESTION OF A DECLARATION

Once more the question of a declaration of Axis support for Arab demands arose in connection with propaganda activity. It was thought that such a declaration might make it difficult for the British to negotiate with the Arab leaders, and might have some influence on popular feelings. By agreement with Rashid Ali, the Mufti returned to the question of such a declaration in March 1943, and submitted a draft.† The Mufti insisted that the Axis should finally terminate their silence on the Arab problem, justifying his proposal by the need to counteract the policy of the Allies, particularly that of the U.S.A, which enjoyed great authority among the Arabs. He pointed out that the reason for the Axis unwillingness to issue such a public declaration in the past was no longer valid, for, he pointed out, 'France wanted to first utilise her two trumps, North Africa

- * Ettel to Melchers, Berlin, October 14th, 1943—930/298087-8. List of expelled—930/298090. The Turks did not disturb, for instance, the brothers Adei and Nabih Azma (Syrians), Adel and Amin Arslan (Lebanese), and Muin el-Madhi (Palestinian).
- † Memorandum of Hajj Amin el-Huseini of April 20th, 1943—71/51423-35 and 83/61475-86. The appendices to the memorandum throw light on the political background and aims of the proposition. Besides the draft of a declaration (Appendix 1) and the Japanese statement on the independence of the Arab countries and of India (Appendix 7), the Mufti attached to the memorandum the text of Eden's statements of May 29th, 1941 (Appendix 2) and of February 23rd, 1943 (Appendix 3), an excerpt of the Franco-Syrian treaty of September 19th, 1936 (Appendix 4), the Gaullist statement on the independence of Syria and Lebanon (Appendix 5), and the statement of the U.S. on the independence of Lebanon (Appendix 6). The Mufti wanted to influence the Axis to make greater promises than the Allies.

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and her fleet, against the Axis and later lost them both.' The draft proposed that the Axis declare: (1) that one of its aims is the independence and freedom of the Arab countries exploited by England; (2) its readiness to provide these countries with all assistance in their struggle for freedom and to recognise their independence and sovereignty; (3) recognition of the independence and sovereignty of the five countries of the Fertile Crescent (Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Transjordan and Iraq) and agreement to their unification; (4) readiness to liquidate the Jewish national home in Palestine. The formulae of the Mufti's draft declaration were dug up from previous public and secret Axis statements.⁷

In principle, the Italians favoured the idea of a declaration, considering it to be necessary. For there was nothing left to do in the Arab countries except to conduct propaganda.8 Like the Mufti, Italian officials called attention to the need for countering the Allies' measures, with the difference, however, that they saw the main danger in the English Pan-Arabist policy.9 Two weeks after the Tunisia defeat the Italians approached Berlin about issuing a declaration as rapidly as possible. 10 But they proposed rather to publish Ribbentrop's and Ciano's identical letter to Haji Amin and Rashid Ali of the year before when the Axis had scored victories on all fronts, or at least to refer to those letters. They thus hoped to avoid the impression that a declaration in support of Arab demands was something new in Axis policy. 11 At the end of June the Italians submitted their draft of a declaration. 12 It pertained only to the countries of the Fertile Crescent and the Palestine question was formulated differently from previous documents. The Italians proposed to include a promise that the Axis would reject all solutions to the Palestine question which ran contrary to the aspirations and interests of the Arab nation. Nothing was said this time about liquidating the Jewish national home there.

But the Germans were of the opinion that a time of defeat was not suitable to issuing such declarations and suggested postponing the matter for an indefinite period. Again differences arose on the range of the promises to be made to the Arabs. German officials agreed with el-Kilani's warning that it would be incorrect to limit the commitments to the countries of the Fertile Crescent when English activity extended much farther. But it was not these differences that prevented the issuing of a declaration. The Arab question was now decidedly a secondary one with the Germans, especially with the overthrow of Mussolini in July and the capitulation of Italy in September 1943.

Several days after the capitulation of Marshal Badoglio's Government Dr. Fritz Grobba (now working in the archives of the Reich's

Paris Embassy),15 proposed to his superiors in Auswärtiges Amt that more attention should be paid to Arab affairs and that the declaration continuously sought by Arab leaders should be issued. Grobba thought it was possible to do this then, since 'Italy's treachery' freed the Germans from the obligation of reckoning with her aims in the Arab world. 16 But a declaration was not issued. On November 2nd, 1943. the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, a protest meeting, however, was held in Berlin at which the Mufti read with great pomp a despatch from Ribbentrop. The Foreign Minister of the Third Reich declared that Germany 'is today more than at any other time' an ally of the Arabs, and that the 'wiping' of the Jewish national home 'off the face of the earth' as well as the 'liberation of the Arab nations from foreign oppression and exploitation is a basic principle of German policy. A despatch from Himmler, too, was read at this meeting, but that was limited to anti-Jewish pronouncements.¹⁷ Ribbentrop's message was one more proof of the great restraint in extending promises to the Arabs.

There was no particular cause for the Germans to regard the issuing of an 'Arab declaration' as necessary or desirable. German propaganda got along without such declarations, for its aim was to sow dissension in the enemy camp without advancing positive programmes. In their propaganda in the Arab language the Germans limited themselves to attacks on the anti-Fascist coalition, incitements against the Jews ('Kill Jews wherever you find them, for the love of God, history and religion')¹⁸ adulation of Hitler, Germany and Japan for the friendship to the Arabs, calling for an uprising in Palestine, etc. On special occasions, such as Muslim holidays, anniversaries or important political events Hajj Amin appeared on German radio, sometimes together with Rashid Ali.

Despite the negative experience with Arab companies in Tunisia, the Germans continued to form Arab military units. Now North African Arabs were used more often for that purpose. In June 1943 a new unit of the Deutsch-Arabische Lehrabteilung, composed in great part of Moroccans, was being trained in Greece. Eighty of them were schooled as paratroopers, while most of the total of 600 were to be employed as guards in Greece. This was evidently realised, for it was disclosed at the 'Balkan Trial' in Nuremberg that Arab guards had caught British parachutists sent to the Greek partisans. Arab paratroopers were dropped in Palestine and Iraq at the end of 1944. At the end of the war there were probably Arab soldiers on the Italian or Western Front. The American congressman, Emanuel Celler, recalled on April 10th, 1946, that there were 2,000 Arab Axis soldiers at the U.S.A. war prisoners' camp in Opelika, Alabama. On November 1st, 1944, the Arab units in the Wehrmacht were

regrouped into an 'independent Arab brigade'. This was meant as the Nazi reply to the decisions by the British Government on September 20th, 1944, to form a separate Jewish infantry brigade commanded by a Jewish brigadier-general and wearing Jewish insignia, ²³ after several years' bargaining with the Jewish Agency. This was widely utilised by the Germans in their Arab propaganda.

THE MUFTI'S FURTHER ACTIVITY

The propaganda work in which Hajj Amin actively participated as well as the Arab Bureau (al-maktab al-arabi) which he led, was now of little significance. It in no way threatened Britain's position in the Arab lands. But the ex-Mufti's usefulness to the Germans was not limited to the Arab field. He was active in many other spheres even at the time of the Axis victories in the Soviet Union and North Africa. Documents show that he worked closely with the organisations of Muslim traitors from the Crimea, the Northern Caucasus, Azerbaijan and Central Asia. He also did his share in pro-German propaganda in India.24 The Mufti most probably helped to form military units of Soviet Muslims and did much work among Balkan Muslims. Nazi propaganda boasted of his contribution in forming Waffen S.S. units of Bosnian Muslims. The list of questions the Mufti desired to raise with Auswärtiges Amt in May 1943 gives some idea of the range of his interests and activity. Besides the question of an Arab declaration the Mufti wanted to discuss problems of Croatia and the question of an S.S. Muslim division, problems of the Bulgarian Mohammedan population and intervention in that country for the purpose of preventing the emigration of 4,500 Jews (4,000 of them children) to Palestine; the question of turning over the former Jewish residences in Berlin to the Muslim Institute; the proposition for setting up a special Arab-Muslim department in Auswärtiges Amt.²⁵ The Mufti's efforts to prevent Jewish emigration from Europe were an inseparable part of his activity during World War II.²⁶ Among documents published after the war are some of his letters to the Governments of Bulgaria (May 6th, 1943), Italy (June 10th, 1943), Rumania (June 28th, 1943) and Hungary (of the same date) demanding that they rescind permission for Jewish emigration. He urged that the Jews should be sent to Poland instead, 'where they are under active supervision'.27 The confession of one of Eichmann's collaborators, Dieter Wisliceny (hanged in Bratislava) and the evidence of R. Kasztner, a leader of Hungarian Jews, confirm the Mufti's role in preventing Jewish emigration from the European countries occupied by the Nazis. The testimony shows that the Mufti worked closely with the Nazi machinery responsible for exterminating

the Jews.²⁸ In 1944 he participated in organising the anti-Jewish Congress at Kraków.*

During the final months of the war Hajj Amin el-Huseini and Rashid Ali el-Kilani often moved from place to place in fear at first of bombing and later of the Allied armies approaching Germany from East and West. They turned up at the Swiss border when Germany capitulated. El-Kilani was not admitted and proceeded to Belgium, then to France. He escaped from Marseilles in the middle of July 1945 and made his way to Beirut. From there he proceeded to Damascus and finally got to Riyadh, where he was granted asylum by Ibn Saud. He returned to Iraq only after the revolution of July 14th, 1958. Attempting to play the role of leader of the Pan-Arab political current, he was arrested in December 1958 and released on July 14th, 1961 with a group of Iraqi ex-Premiers.

Haji Amin went to Bern, but he was refused permission to live in Switzerland. He was arrested upon crossing the French border and kept in a villa near Paris. But there he had freedom of movement. was able to receive Arab politicians and resumed his role as the leader of the Palestinian Arabs. When he became aware that he could be called to responsibility as a war criminal he escaped in May 1946 with a passport made out to Maaruf ed-Dawalibi-later active in Syrian politics. He got to Cairo on an American military plane by way of Rome and Athens. There he remained as guest of King Farouk. He still had an important role to play in the final stage of the struggle for Palestine, which eventually led to the emergence of the state of Israel and the exodus of many thousands of Palestinian Arabs. In 1962 he was living in Beirut.²⁹ In the first phase of the war in Palestine some of the other Arab leaders already mentioned took an important though unenviable part. Fawzi el-Qawuqji, for instance, was Commander of the Arab 'Liberation Army' (iavsh al-Inqad.)30

POWER POLITICS AND THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

It is still premature to investigate in full the implications of Nazi Germany's policy in the Arab lands. Many of the participants are still alive, and people whose views were formed in that period often occupy public posts or even central positions in the Arab countries. Ties made then have not been broken and some Arab countries have followed the example of West Germany, Argentina and Spain in shielding Nazi criminals. The German Federal Republic has entered the ranks of imperialist rivalry for influence in the Arab East.³¹ It is

* PS—1752 IMT, Vol. XXVIII. The congress did not take place. (See A. Eisenbach, *Hitlerowska polityka zaglady Żydów*—The Hitlerite Policy of Exterminating the Jews—Warsaw, 1962, p. 614.)

difficult to estimate fully the role of recent history in the present and future expansion of the Bonn Republic.

We can, however, briefly summarise and characterise the period treated in the present work. Those were times when Middle East events took place under the influence of growing Axis power. The Axis, particularly Germany, was able to utilise—and did to an extent utilise—and exploit the Arab national movement for its purposes. Nazi relations to Arab nationalism and its leaders were auxiliary to German policy towards the other great powers, primarily Great Britain, her chief opponent in the Mediterranean and West Europe. As long as Germany counted on an understanding with Great Britain, she greatly limited her activity in the Arab East. True, the plan for the partition of Palestine and the formation there of a Jewish state (1937) inclined the German ruling circles to concern themselves with Arab affairs. But this did not effect any basic change in German policy.

The change in Anglo-German relations came as a result of the Czechoslovak crisis and the Munich Conference. At that time the Germans did take more far-reaching measures in the Arab countries: they financed and provided arms to the Palestinian rebels, established diplomatic contact with Ibn Saud and concluded an agreement to donate and sell him arms. But new factors were making themselves felt which hampered German activity. Chief among them was the fact that the Reich had to reckon with the interests of Italy, its closest ally. The Berlin leaders considered that in the struggle with the 'have' powers, the main supporters of the Versailles system, a much greater role was played by the rivals of England and France among the Great Powers than by the national liberation movements.

In his statements during the final months of the war (noted by Martin Bormann and published after the war as his Political Testament) Hitler pointed to the new possibilities created for Germany after the defeat. He saw Germany's hope in sharpening contradictions between the Soviet Union and the United States and in an alliance between Germany and the exploited colonial nations of Asia. What is more, Hitler expressed regret for not having fully exploited the possibilities of the national movements in the French possessions, particularly in Syria and Tunisia. These statements seem to have been expressions of his disillusionment with the alliance with Italy and collaboration with Vichy. They also reflect the pseudo-revolutionary pose of national socialism assumed so frequently, especially after the attempt on Hitler's life on July 20th, 1944.32 These statements, however do not reflect the true approach of Hitler and his officials. During the conference of November 1937 (the contents of which are known from the famous Hossbach Protocol),33 Hitler

declared without equivocation that the 'have' powers' chief opponents were not the liberation movements of the dependent countries but their imperialist rivals. Melchers's memorandum of December 194034 throws an interesting light on Nazi Germany's attitude to the national movements of the colonial and dependent countries. The then director of Section Pol VII, and the post-war West German Ambassador to Amman, Baghdad and New Delhi, pointed out that Germans had no reason to sympathise with the Arab people, for the Arabs, he said, were basically hostile to Europe. In his opinion, therefore, the Reich should support Arab national demands only in so far as it served its purposes, and not out of sympathy. Therefore an aversion to the national movements of colonial and dependent countries arose naturally from Nazi Germany's political philosophy, independent of transient political considerations, in distinction to the political philosophies of Japan or the U.S.A.—not to speak of the socialist countries.

RACISM AND THE 'EUROPEAN IDEA'

Nazi political philosophy was related to racist ideology and the so-called 'European idea'. Nazi racism made itself constantly felt in Germany's relations with the Arab nationalist leaders. True, the principal aspect of Nazi racism—anti-Semitism—tended to consolidate these relations owing to the Jewish-Arab conflict in Palestine. In reality Germany's persecution of the Jews had negative consequences for the Palestinian Arabs. But not only the Jews, but the peoples of Asia and Africa generally occupied a very low rung in Hitler's racial ladder. A contemptuous attitude to the Arabs, aversion to their character and political behaviour, disbelief in their stateforming capacity and their loyalty as allies are expressed by many statements of German leaders and officials. Only a few Arab politicians, especially Hajj Amin el-Huseini, were regarded as exceptions, owing to their alleged part-Aryan descent. Whatever the promises made to the Arabs—and there were not many even of them—the Germans never for a moment doubted that the Arabs would remain dependent and dominated by European masters after the Nazi total victory.

'The European Idea' was the Nazi semantic for German cooperation with favoured European powers dependent on her in the division of colonies and spheres of influence among the creators of this 'new order' in Europe. The Germans claimed for themselves a Central African colonial empire situated between the Indian and Atlantic oceans. South of this empire was to stretch the sphere of influence of the Union of South Africa, to the north-east the Italian

sphere and in the north-west that of France. Important enclaves were to fall to Spain and Portugal.³⁵ The neighbouring East Arab countries were to be embraced in the European spheres of influence. Officially the Germans acknowledged that they were to be under Italian influence, but in reality they intended to reserve for themselves considerable political and economic interests there. It is certain that her colonial aspirations and her envisaged agreement with other colonial powers to a great extent limited Germany's actions in the Arab countries. In Syria and Tunisia, where she had possibilities of making some constitutional changes favourable to the Arabs, she did nothing in that respect. It may be instructive to compare this policy of Germany, particularly in Tunisia, with that of Japan in Indonesia, Vietnam and Burma. In the last stages of the war the Japanese turned over a large part of the government to the native nationalists and thus facilitated the formation of national governments. The Germans on the contrary preserved the colonial status quo in Tunisia to the very end. For the policy of Nazi Germany towards the Arabs rested on the foundations of the old colonialism in the traditional meaning of the term—despite all the demagogy regarding independence and liberty.

EXIGENCIES OF WAR

The needs of war often dictate behaviour contrary to the political philosophy of a régime. Thus during World War I the German Kaiser advocated revolutionising the enemy's hinterland and the British gave support to Arab nationalism despite the standpoint of their Indian Colonial Government. During World War II the English supported the Communist guerillas in Malaya and Yugoslavia, while war needs impelled the Americans to insist on an understanding between the Kuomintang and the Communists in China. But how was Germany's policy toward Arab nationalism shaped by the exigencies of war operations?

For Nazi Germany the needs of war first of all required consideration of the interests of the other nations whose armed forces could either facilitate or hinder her victory. As shown above, such states were Italy and France, Spain and Turkey: the Italians as Germany's war allies, France and Spain as states controlling considerable territories in North Africa constituting the hinterlands of Axis armed forces, Turkey (and before July 1941 also France) as a state whose co-operation was necessary to realise the Reich's plans in the countries of the Fertile Crescent. The interests of all these states conflicted with Arab aspirations and the Germans had to reckon with them in their Mediterranean operations.

What is more, Germany never attempted to determine the fate

of World War II in the Near and Middle East. The considerable successes she scored there in 1941–2 were due primarily to the Allies' weakness. This does not mean that the fighting there did not play an important role from the viewpoint of the totality of war operations. It seems that the loss of North Africa in 1942–3 seriously restricted Germany's manoeuvring ability later on, during the final defeat. In his *Political Testament* Hitler expressed deep disappointment and dissatisfaction at his alliance with Mussolini,³⁶ though, as we saw, he did not know how to make use of this alliance in the Near and Middle East.

After the fall of France the Allied forces were so weak and disorganised in that region that it would have sufficed (according to some strategists)³⁷ for three German divisions, one armoured and two infantry, to score a decisive victory: to conquer the Suez Canal and flank the southern frontier of the U.S.S.R. But the Germans first counted on Great Britain suing for peace after the fall of France, and later speculated that she would surrender under the threat of invasion or that the Luftwaffe would make an invasion possible. With neither of these hopes fulfilled, the British gained enough time to concentrate adequate forces in Egypt and to destroy Graziani's army in the Western Desert. German policy toward the Arab countries thus reflected a lack of military initiative. The Germans did practically nothing except conduct a propaganda campaign. And the contacts they did have with leaders and political forces resulted primarily from Arab initiative.

In the next period, that is, beginning with the autumn of 1940, the Nazi Military Command began to interest itself in the Middle East. Mussolini's invasion of Greece and his failure in North Africa and probably also German intentions in the Balkans drew its attention to the Arab countries. Owing to geographical considerations and because of the limited forces at her disposal, the Balkans and the Middle East constituted one operational area for Great Britain. But the German Command set itself rather limited tasks in North Africa at that time. It was at most concerned with acquiring air bases from which to bombard and mine the Suez Canal. It was only when the Italians suffered a serious defeat (December 1940-January 1941) that Hitler assigned Rommel to North Africa for defensive purposes. He was to prevent the loss by the Italians of all their North African colonies and to prevent the British troops from making contact with the French forces in the Maghreb. The final showdown in that region was postponed by Hitler till after the consummation of operation 'Barbarossa'. The Nazi régime's main centre of attention was the preparation of the invasion of the U.S.S.R. and not the North African operation.

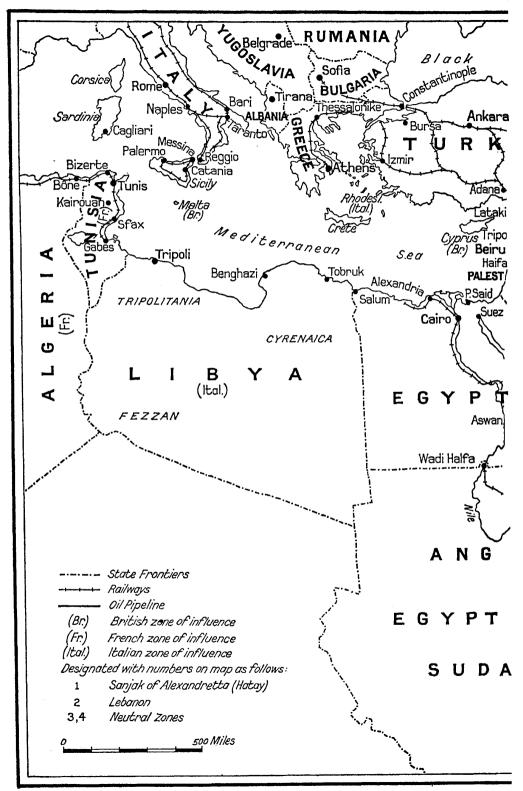
Decisions on the number of troops to be sent to North Africa were made in light of the above conception. True, the weakening of Italy and the presence of German troops in North Africa inclined the Nazi leadership to occupy itself more actively with Arab affairs, particularly when the anti-British movement emerged in Iraq. But although it was decided under Ribbentrop's insistence to stir up an insurrection against the British in Iraq, many important decisions regarding the Arab countries were seriously delayed, while lack of clarity prevailed to the last moment on the manner, character and range of German activity. This state of affairs was probably mainly caused by the circumstance that the military chiefs had all their attention focused on the preparations to attack the Soviet Union, and they were not anxious to undertake new ventures in the Middle East.

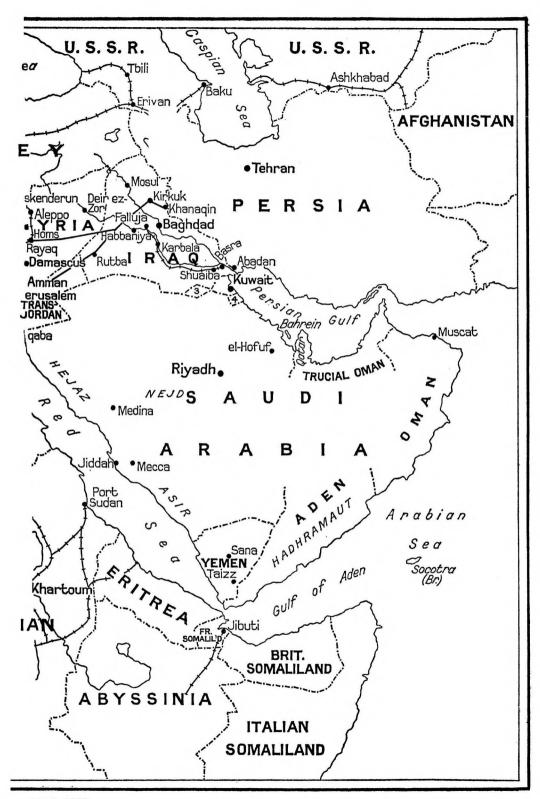
But it should not be forgotten that Hitler was compelled to change his timetable for launching the attack on the U.S.S.R. because of the changes in the situation. Such was the case with the Yugoslav campaign. Of course, it is possible to weave all kinds of suppositions: what would have happened if the German troops had completed their Balkan operation sooner, or if they had not suffered such heavy losses in Crete? What would have been the fate of the war if the British Government had failed to overcome the resistance of the military command in the Middle East; if London had not resorted to armed intervention in Iraq, or if the Iraqi army had displayed greater combat ability; or even if the Germans had better-organised communications and more accurate information on the course of the fighting and the situation in Iraq? Strategists agree that even small German forces might have radically changed the course of events there. However that may be, the principal reason why the Germans acted the way they did and not otherwise in the Arab countries during the first half of 1941 was their planned attack on the U.S.S.R. This was expressed in directive number 30 of May 23rd, 1941, cited above, that the final showdown with Great Britain in the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf area must wait till after 'Barbarossa'.38

Germany intended to make greater use of Arab nationalism after the victory over the Soviet Union, that is in the autumn of 1941, according to Hitler's plans. Directive number 32 of June 11th, 1941, on the preparation of plans for the war operations to follow 'Barbarossa', devoted a special point to 'the utilisation of the Arab liberation movement'. Service instructions' (Dienstanweisung) were issued as a special appendix to this directive for Sonderstab F. 40 The German military staffs and Auswärtiges Amt made preparations to exploit the Arab population and political circles in their plans for an offensive through Egypt, Turkey, Syria and Palestine as well as via

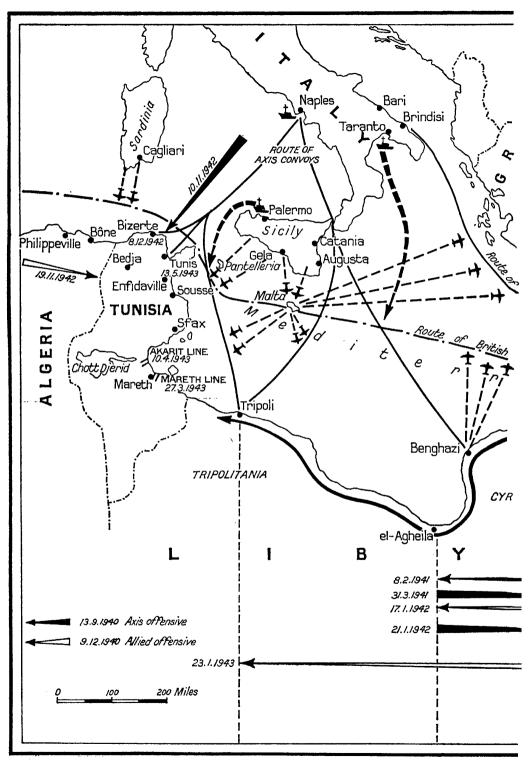
the Caucasus, Iran and Iraq. Hitler's failure to attain his aims in the Soviet Union determined the course of events on the North African front and in the Middle East in general. Once again the Germans failed to send adequate forces to that front, while Great Britain managed to concentrate a considerable army in the Middle East equipped with the latest weapons. In the summer and early autumn of 1942 the realisation of the Nazi plans in that region seemed to be near. But the German catastrophe on the Volga and the Axis defeat at el-Alamein frustrated all German plans for the Arab world. From then on, particularly with the expulsion of the Axis forces from North Africa, Arab affairs almost ceased to play any role in the Nazi military and political plans.

As pointed out above, the extremist Arab nationalist politicians saw the war as their most suitable occasion to strike out for Arab liberation, an occasion of which 'no one but Allah knew if it ever would be repeated.' Actually, as we have tried to show, this was an illusory occasion which no responsible politician should have relied upon. Their ties with the Axis brought the Arabs nothing positive. They, in fact, can consider themselves lucky in not experiencing the lot of the European countries in one form or another under German or Italian domination during World War II. The war, especially the years 1939-42, was a period of crisis for the Arab national movement. The forces which gave Arab nationalism a new direction emerged after the war. The time did come for the Arab freedom struggle, but not from the efforts in Berlin and Rome. The occasion for Arab liberation came precisely with the defeat of 'the most reactionary, most chauvinistic, most imperialistic elements of finance capital'41 who ruled in Berlin and Rome. The occasion came with the victory of the anti-Fascist coalition—as a result of the new world balance of forces following World War II.

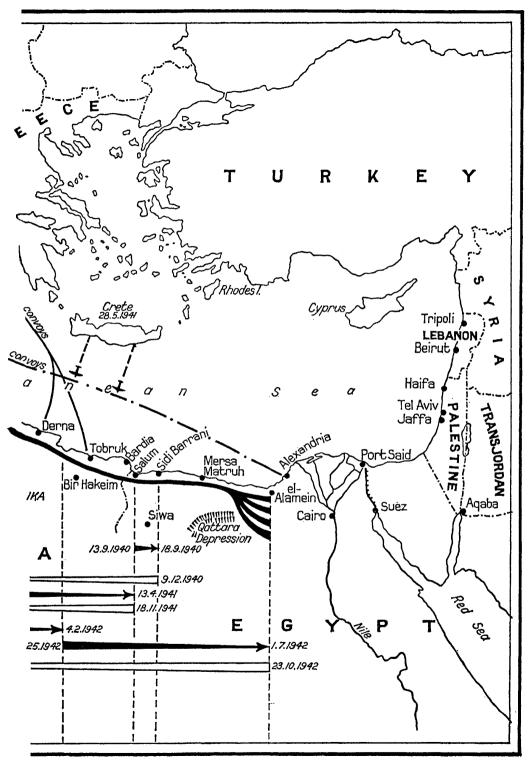




East, 1939.



North Africa-fighting in the Western Desert



and for control of the Mediterranean, 1940-43.



I. THE GREAT POWERS AND THE ARAB EAST

¹ R. Bullard, Britain and the Middle East, London, 1951, Pt 3.

² See R. Graziani, *Pace Romana in Libia*, Milan, 1937; F. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, Oxford, 1949.

³ See Novaya istoriya stran zarubezhnogo Vostoka, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1952, pp. 365-437; S. N. Fisher, The Middle East. A History, London, 1959, Pt. 3.

⁴ J. Pajewski, 'Mitteleuropa'. Studia z dziejów imperializmu niemieckiego w

dobie pierwszej wojny światowej, Poznań, 1959, p. 143.

⁵ The best study about the Baghdad Railway is E. M. Earle, Turkey, the Great Powers and the Baghdad Railway, New York, 1923; see also Pajewski, op. cit.

⁶ G. E. Kirk, A Short History of the Middle East, London, 1948, p. 98; W. L. Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism 1890–1902, New York, 1951, pp. 639 and 643.

⁷ See G. Antonius, The Arab Awakening, The Story of the Arab National Movement, London, 1945; Amin Said, Ath-thawra al-arabiyya al-kubra, Cairo, 1934, 3 vols.; Elie Kedourie, England and the Middle East. The Destruction of the Ottoman Empire 1914–1920, London, 1956; H. W. V. Temperley, A History of the Peace Conference of Paris, Vol. 6, London, 1924, Ch. 1, Pt. 2.

⁸ A classic description of the Arab revolt is T. E. Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom. A Triumph, London, 1935. See also F. Brémond, Le Hédjaz dans la guerre mondiale, Paris, 1931; H. Young, The Independent Arab, London, 1933; Amin Said, op. cit.; Nuri al-Sa'id, Muhadarat an al-harakat al-askariyya lil-jaysh

al-'arabi fi al-Hijaz wa-Suriya 1916-1918, Baghdad, 1947.

⁹ The text of the Husein-McMahon correspondence appears in Correspondence between Sir Henry McMahon, His Majesty's High Commissioner at Cairo, and the Sherif Hussein of Mecca, July 1915-March 1916, Cmd. 5957, London, 1939. See also G. Antonius, op. cit., pp. 413-27; J. C. Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, New York, 1956, pp. 13-17. Zeine N. Zeine gives the text of Sherif Husein's letter of February 18th, 1916 (not reproduced in the abovementioned books) in an appendix to his book The Struggle for Arab Independence. Western Diplomacy and the Rise and Fall of Faisal's Kingdom in Syria, Beirut, 1960, pp. 244-7.

10 The Russian documents relating to the agreements on the partition of Turkey were published after the Revolution by the Soviet Government—E. A. Adamov, Evropeiskie derzhavy i Turciya vo vremya mirovoi voiny, Moscow, 1925-6 (German translation: E. A. Adamow, Die europäischen Mächte und die Türkei während des Weltkrieges. Die Aufteilung der asiatischen Türkei, Dresden, 1932). The relevant British documents are cited in E. L. Woodward and R. Butler, Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1st Ser., Vol. 4, London, 1952, pp. 241-51. J. C. Hurewitz, op. cit., pp. 18-22, reprints these documents. For the text of the so-called Sykes-Picot agreement see G. Antonius, op. cit., pp. 428-30.

¹¹ See E. Kedourie, op. cit. Ch. 5-6; Zeine N. Zeine, op. cit.

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¹² Ch. Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, London, 1949, p. 193; H. F. Frischwasser-Ra'anan, *The Frontiers of a Nation*, London, 1955, pp. 75-76.

¹³ Abd ar-Rahman ar-Rafii, *Thawrat 1919 sana*, Cairo, 1946, Ch. 1; J.

Marlowe, Anglo-Egyptian Relations 1800-1953, London, 1954, Ch. 9.

¹⁴ Fritz Fischer, Griff nach der Weltmacht, Düsseldorf, 1961, pp. 134-5.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 144.

16 H. St. J. Philby, Saudi Arabia, London, 1955, pp. 272-4.

¹⁷ F. Fischer, op. cit., pp. 144-5; Zeine N. Zeine, The Struggle for Arab

Independence, loc. cit., pp. 21-22.

¹⁸ G. Antonius, op. cit., Ch. VI; Zeine N. Zeine, Arab-Turkish Relations and the Emergence of Arab Nationalism, Beirut, 1958, Ch. 5; A. Kohen, Ha-mizrah ha-'arvi, Tel-Aviv, 1957, pp. 385-90.

¹⁹ F. Fischer, op. cit., p. 145.

²⁰ Zeine N. Zeine, Arab Turkish Relations . . ., loc. cit.; G. Stitt, A Prince of Arabia, the Emir Shereef Ali Haidar, London, 1937; Ahmed Djemal Pasha, Memoirs of a Turkish Statesman 1913–1919, New York, 1922.

²¹ Elie Kedourie, op. cit., pp. 107-9; G. Antonius, op. cit., pp. 253-8 and

267-70.

²² Part IV of the treaty deals with German overseas interests. The English text of the Versailles Treaty appears in *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States 1919. The Paris Peace Conference*, Vol. 13, Washington, 1947.

²³ H. W. V. Temperley, A History of the Peace Conference of Paris, Vol. 6, London, 1924, pp. 164-6 and 181-2; H. H. Cumming, Franco-British Rivalry in the Post-War Near East. The Decline of French Influence 1914-1923, London, 1938; Zeine N. Zeine, The Struggle for Arab Independence, loc. cit.; H. F. Frischwasser-Ra'anan, Frontiers of a Nation, loc. cit.

²⁴ For interesting remarks on this subject see J. Marlowe, The Seat of Pilate.

An Account of the Palestine Mandate, London, 1959, pp. 54-55.

²⁵ Sati' al-Husri, Yawm Maysalun, Beirut, 1947; Zeine N. Zeine, The Struggle

for Arab Independence, loc. cit., Ch. 9.

²⁶ See Velikii Oktyabr i narody Vostoka, Moscow, 1958; Novaya istoriya stran zarubezhnogo Vostoka, Vol. 2, and Noveishaya istorija stran zarubezhnogo Vostoka, Moscow, 1954, Vol. 1.

²⁷ See note 22.

²⁸ The text of the Palestine mandate appears in the League of Nations Official Journal 1922, no. 7, Pt. II.

²⁹ The text of the Faisal-Weizmann understanding is cited by G. Antonius.

op. cit., pp. 437-9.

30 There are numerous publications on Palestine and the Palestine mandate. Of the latest works J. Marlowe, *The Seat of Pilate*, loc. cit., and J. C. Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine*, New York, 1950 are worthy of special mention. Hurewitz's book deals with the period 1936-48 and contains an exhaustive bibliography.

31 On Transjordan see J. B. Glubb, The Story of the Arab Legion, London, 1948; A. S. Kirkbride, A Crackle of Thorns, London, 1956; R. Patai, The Kingdom of Jordan, Princeton, 1958; Abd Allah ibn Husein, The Memoirs of King Abdullah of Transjordan, New York, 1950; Abd Allah ibn Husein, My Memoirs Completed,

Washington, 1954.

³² See L. N. Kotlov, Nacionalno-osvoboditelnoe vosstanie 1920 goda v Irake, Moscow, 1958; P. W. Ireland, Iraq. A Study in Political Development, London, 1937, Ch. 13-14.

33 The text of the Anglo-Iraqi treaty is printed in J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy* in the Near and Middle East, Vol. 2, Princeton N.J., 1956, pp. 178-81.

³⁴ On Iraq see B. M. Dancig, Irak v proshlom i nastoyashchem, Moscow,

1960; G. I. Mirski, *Irak v smutnoe vremya 1930–1941*, Moscow, 1961; P. W. Ireland, loc. cit.; S. H. Longrigg, *Iraq 1900–1950*, London, 1953 (a good bibliography); C. Marinucci de Reguardati, *Irak*, Rome, 1955–6, 2 vols.; M. Khadduri, *Independent Iraq 1932–1958*, London, 1960.

³⁵ A. ar-Rafii, *Thawrat 1919 sana*, loc. cit.

³⁶ The British declaration of February 28th, 1922, was published in *Egypt no. 1* (1922), Cmd. 1952.

37 The text of the Anglo-Egyptian treaty of 1936 appears in League of Nations

Treaty Series 1936-1937, Vol. 173, no. 4031, pp. 401-25.

³⁸ There is an abundant literature on Egypt. See, e.g., L. Vatolina, Sovremennyi Egipet, Moscow, 1949; Ch. Issawi, Egypt at Mid-Century. An Economic Survey, London, 1954; Lord Lloyd, Egypt since Cromer, London, 1933, 2 vols.; J. Marlowe, Anglo-Egyptian Relations, loc. cit.; T. Little, Egypt, London, 1958; M. Rifaat, The Awakening of Modern Egypt, London, 1947; M. Colombe, L'Evolution d'Egypte, Paris, 1951. On the Sudan see Y. D. Dmitrievski, Anglo-egipetskii Sudan, Moscow, 1951; Sir H. McMichael, The Sudan, London, 1954; Mekki Abbas, The Sudan Question. The Dispute about the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium 1884–1951, London, 1952.

³⁹ On the Persian Gulf states see A. T. Wilson, *The Persian Gulf*, London, 1928; Sir R. Hay, *The Persian Gulf States*, Washington, 1958; J. Marlowe, *The Persian Gulf in the Twentieth Century*, London, 1962.

- ⁴⁰ See Grobba's despatches, Baghdad, February 5th, 1938, and January 3rd, 1939—K868/K220366-7 and K868/K220496; v. Hentig's note, Berlin, February 23rd, 1939—K868/K220520-2.
- ⁴¹ Reference books on Saudi Arabia: H. St. J. Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, loc. cit.; H. St. J. Philby, *Arabian Jubilee*, London, 1954, and other studies by this author. ⁴² See S. H. Longrigg, *Oil in the Middle East*, London, 1961, pp. 106–10.
- ⁴³ Literature on the Yemen is rather scarce. See I. A. Genin, Yemen, Moscow, 1953; B. Reilly, Aden and the Yemen, London, 1960; G. E. Heyworth-Dunne, Al-Yemen, Cairo, 1952; G. Pawelke, Der Jemen, das verbotene Land, Düsseldorf, 1959.
- ⁴⁴ The Anglo-Italian agreement of April 16th, 1938 was published in Cmd. 5726, and its ratification on November 16th, 1938, in Cmd. 5923. See E. L. Woodward and R. Butler, *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919–1939*, 3rd Ser., Vol. III, London, 1950, Ch. VI, esp. no. 367.
- ⁴⁵ The text of the French mandate is printed in the appendix to A. H. Hourani's Syria and Lebanon. A Political Essay, London, 1946, pp. 308–14. This appendix contains fifteen other important documents on Syria and Lebanon in the years 1936–44.

⁴⁶ The text of the treaties, ibid., pp. 314–37.

- ⁴⁷ On French rule in Syria and Lebanon see C. Henry-Haye et P. Vienot, Les Relations de la France et de la Syrie, Paris, 1939; P. Rondot, Les Institutions politiques du Liban, Paris, 1947; A. H. Hourani, Syria and Lebanon, loc. cit.; S. H. Longrigg, Syria and Lebanon under the French Mandate, London, 1958 (an exhaustive bibliography).
- ⁴⁸ See the *International Oil Cartel*, Washington, 1952, Ch. 4; S. H. Longrigg, *Oil in the Middle East*, loc. cit., pp. 29–32 and 69–70.

⁴⁹ M. Brooks, Oil and Foreign Policy, London 1948, Ch. 4.

⁵⁰ Defence Secrurity Office C.I.C.I., Iraq, A Short History of Enemy Subversive Activity, Baghdad, April 11th, 1945—a digest appears in the American Christian Palestine Committee, The Arab War Effort. A Documented Account, New York, 1947, pp. 30–34.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 6.

⁵² Ibid., p. 7; B. Vernier, La Politique islamique de l'Allemagne, Paris, 1939,

pp. 69-72; E. Marston, 'Fascist Tendencies in Pre-war Arab Politics', *The Middle East Forum*, Beirut, May 1959.

⁵³ F. Gabrielli, *The Arab Revival*, London, 1961, pp. 84-86.

⁵⁴ On the Muslim Brethren see Ishak Musa Huseini, *The Moslem Brethren*, Beirut, 1956; see also J. Marlowe, *The Seat of Pilate*, loc. cit., pp. 137–8.

⁵⁵ Elisabeth Monroe, *Political Interests in the Mediterranean*, London, 1938, discusses Italian expansion as well as British and French interests in the Mediterranean area.

⁵⁶ The texts of the agreements with Italy on the partition of the Ottoman Empire are cited by J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, Vol. 2, pp. 11-12 and 23-25; see H. W. V. Temperley, *A History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, Vol. 6, Ch. 1, Pt. 1.

⁵⁷ See the collection of German AA documents 'Kriegsgerät Irak', Ser. nos. 6665H and 6666H, and the collection 'Pol. VII. Politische Beziehungen Saudi-

Arabiens zu Deutschland', Ser. nos. K863-K865.

⁵⁸ R. Hüber, Deutschland und der Wirtschaftsaufbau des Orients, Stuttgart, 1937, p. 26.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 55.

60 R. Hüber, Arabisches Wirtschaftsleben, Heidelberg, 1943, p. 130.

61 Ibid., pp. 127-8.

- ⁶² See the collection of documents of the German Ministry for Economic Affairs 'British Oil Development Co.', DZA Potsdam Reichswirtschaftsministerium, nos. 11863–7.
 - 63 R. Hüber, Arabisches Wirtschaftsleben, loc. cit., p. 101.

64 See collection 'Kriegsgerät Irak', as above.

65 von der Damerau's note, Berlin July 24th, 1937—6666H/E505585-7; un-

signed note, Berlin, May 19th, 1937—6666H/E505487-90.

66 Ow-Wachendorf to AA, Ramleh—San Stefano, August 21st, 1937—collection 'Kriegsgerät Ägypten', DZA Potsdam AA, no. 68425; Cairo Branch of Dresdner Bank to Ausland-Sekretariat VI, August 17th, 1938, ibid.

67 Pilder (Dresdner Bank) to Grobba, Berlin, July 6th, 1937—6666H/E505567—8; Grobba to AA, Baghdad, June 18th, 1937—6666H/E505541-6; Clodius to

Grobba, Berlin, July 21st, 1937-6666H/E505571-2.

⁶⁸ Ow-Wachendorf to AA, Cairo, November 4th, 1937, and June 24th, 1938, 'Kriegsgerät Ägypten', DZA Potsdam AA, no. 68425.

⁶⁹ Ow-Wachendorf, Cairo, July 27th, 1938—as above.

70 R. Hüber, Deutschland und der Wirtschaftsaufbau des Orients, loc. cit.,

p. 52; B. Vernier, op. cit., p. 27.

⁷¹ For instance F. W. Fernau, Der Orient im britischen Weltreich, eine Wehrwirtschaftliche Untersuchung, Hamburg, 1937; G. Tzschirner, Kraftfeld Arabien und Europas Krieg, Dresden, 1939.

72 See collection 'Politische Abteilung. Akten betreffend Arabien', esp. K868/

K220203, K868/K220225-8, K868/K220244, K868/K220301-6.

⁷³ B. Vernier, op. cit., pp. 89–95.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 38–39.

II. NAZI GERMANY AND THE PEEL COMMISSION PLAN

¹ R. Parkes, The Emergence of the Jewish Problem 1879–1939, London, 1946, Ch. 6 and 8.

² According to data published by the Jewish Agency in *The Jewish Case before the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry on Palestine*, Jerusalem, 1947, p. 440.

³ Palestine, Royal Commission Report, London, HMSO, 1937, Cmd. 5479.

- ⁴ The Arab Office, The Future of Palestine, Geneva, 1947, pp. 43-44.
- ⁵ J. Marlowe, *The Seat of Pilate*, London, 1960, p. 147; J. C. Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine*, New York, 1950, pp. 78–79 and 90; Wadsworth to Secretary of State, Jerusalem, July 12th, 1937—FRUS, 1937, Vol. II, Washington, 1954, p. 894.
- ⁶ R. Hüber, Arabisches Wirtschaftsleben, Heidelberg, 1943, p. 125. The exchange rate of the German mark to the Palestinian pound [= £ 1st.] was: in 1932, 14.75 marks; in 1933, 13.9 marks; in 1937, 12.35 marks.
- ⁷ Letter to Todenhöfer (signature illegible), Berlin, August 19th, 1942, DZA Potsdam AA, no. 48059, pp. 269-71.

⁸ See Hurewitz. op. cit., pp. 85–88.

⁹ Döhle's report, Jerusalem, March 22nd, 1937—1520/373180-9.

¹⁰ Neurath's telegram, Berlin, June 1st, 1937—DGFP, Ser. D, Vol. V,

Washington, 1953, no. 561, pp. 746-7.

¹¹ Circular letter signed by v. Bülow-Schwante, Berlin, June 22nd, 1937—ibid., no. 567, pp. 750–3. Vicco v. Bülow-Schwante, b. May 10th, 1891, the son of Field-Marshal Karl v. Bülow, entered the Auswärtiges Amt after Hitler's advent to power. He now occupies a leading position in the Stumm concern.

12 ibid.

¹³ Neurath's telegram—ibid.

¹⁴ Neurath's memorandum, Berlin, October 26th, 1937—DGFP Ser. D, op. cit., no. 573, pp. 768-9.

¹⁵ Pilger to Grobba, Berlin, February 23rd, 1937—3496H/E019870-1.

¹⁶ Döhle's report, Jerusalem, March 22nd, 1937—1520/373180-9.

¹⁷ Döhle to Auswärtiges Amt, Jerusalem, January 14th, 1938—DGFP op. cit., no. 577, pp. 780-1.

¹⁸ To the Chief of the Auslandsorganisation, Berlin, May 26th, 1937—72/51629-31.

- ¹⁹ Note of Schumburg (official in Referat Deutschland), Berlin, October 12th, 1938—1542/375543-4.
- ²⁰ Bülow-Schwante's note, Berlin, June 11th, 1937—DGFP, op. cit., no. 563, p. 749.

²¹ Unsigned note, Berlin August 7th, 1937—1542/375506-13; Clodius's note,

Berlin January 27th, 1938—DGFP, op. cit., no. 579, pp. 783-5.

- ²² Unsigned note, Berlin, August 7th, 1937—1542/375506–13; memorandum of Utermöhle (official in the Reichsstelle für Devisenbewirtschaftung), 'Jüdische Auswanderung', Berlin, December 7th, 1937—DGFP, op. cit., no. 575, pp. 772–7.
- ²³ To the chief of the Auslandsorganisation, Berlin, May 26th, 1937—72/51629-31; note on the interdepartmental talks of September 21st and 26th, 1937, undated—72/51645-8.
 - ²⁴ Unsigned memorandum, Berlin, August 7th, 1937—1542/375506-13.

²⁵ Hentig's note, Berlin, January 29th, 1938—1542/375538-40.

- ²⁶ Unsigned note, Berlin, August 7th, 1937—1542/375506-13; unsigned note, Berlin, October 12th, 1938—1542/375545-8.
- ²⁷ Unsigned note on conference in the Auswärtiges Amt on July 29th, 1937, Berlin, August 3rd, 1937—1542/375517–20; Clodius's note, Berlin, January 27th, 1938—DGFP, op. cit., no 579, pp. 783–5.

²⁸ 007-PS, IMT, Vol. XXV.

- ²⁹ Grobba's report, Baghdad, July 17th, 1937—DGFP, op. cit., no 567, pp. 756-7.
- ³⁰ Döhle's report, Jerusalem, July 15th, 1937—DGFP, op. cit., no. 566, pp. 755-6.
- ³¹ Seiler to Hentig, Beirut, September 23rd, 1937—K859/K217554-5. Seiler mentions in this letter 'the Palestinian committee of the Syrian nationalists'.

He had apparently in mind the Syrian Committee for the Defence of Palestine, whose leader was Nabih Azma.

³² Seiler's report, Beirut, October 16th, 1937—1541/375399-400.

33 Hentig's note, Berlin, July 29th, 1937—DGFP, op. cit., no. 569, pp. 758-60.

³⁴ Grobba's report, Baghdad, November 9th, 1937—ibid., no. 574, pp. 769-72.

35 Text of Dr. Imam's offer, ibid., no. 576, pp. 778-9.

- ³⁶ Rudolf Güter to Hermann Göring, Lucerne, October 6th, 1937—K859/K217603-4.
 - ³⁷ Hentig's note, Berlin, July 29th, 1937—DGFP, op. cit., no. 569, pp. 758-60.
- 38 Weizsäcker to the legation in Baghdad, Berlin, July 30th, 1937—7061H/E524148.
 - ³⁹ See the Hossbach protocol, 386-PS, IMT, Vol. XXV.

⁴⁰ Report from Beirut, August 24th, 1937—1526/373539-41.

- ⁴¹ Czibulinski's report, Ramleh—San-Stefano, September 18th, 1937—1525/373477-9.
 - ⁴² Hentig's note, Berlin, July 29th, 1937—DGFP, op. cit., no. 569, pp. 758-60.

⁴³ J. Marlowe, op. cit., s. 145.

- ⁴⁴ See Seiler's reports, Beirut, October 16th, 1936, and April 27th, 1937—653/255967-8 and 653/256111; Döhle's report, Jerusalem, January 14th, 1938—DGFP, op. cit., pp. 780-1.
 - ⁴⁵ S. Heald, Documents on International Affairs 1937, London, 1939, p. 86.
- ⁴⁶ Dokumenty i materialy kanuna vtoroi mirovoi voiny, Vol. I, Moscow, 1948, p. 42.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 65.

⁴⁸ E. Wiskemann, The Rome-Berlin Axis, London, 1949, p. 29.

⁴⁹ 375-PS, IMT, Vol. XXV.

⁵⁰ Ciano's conversation with Ribbentrop (Milano, May 6th-7th, 1939)—Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, London, 1948, p. 285.

51 Hentig to Seiler, Berlin, October 10th, 1937—K859/K217557.

52 H. D. Schmidt, 'The Nazi Party in Palestine and the Levant', International

Affairs, 1952, pp. 460-9.

⁵³ Memorandum of May 19th, 1937—6666H/E505487-90. These objections were withdrawn (memorandum of June 1st, 1937—6666H/E505507), but they were soon put forward again (note of July 17th, 1937—6666H/E505575).

⁵⁴ Pilder (Dresdner Bank) to Grobba, Berlin, July 6th, 1937—6666H/

E505567-8.

- ⁵⁵ Clodius to Grobba, Berlin, July 21st, 1937—6666H/E505571-2.
- ⁵⁶ Clodius to the Embassy in London, Berlin, October 27th, 1937—DZA Potsdam AA, no. 68425; notes from November 13th, 1937—ibid.

⁵⁷ Notes from May 19th, 1937—6666H/E505487–90.

⁵⁸ Damerau's note, Berlin, July 28th, 1937—6666H/E505585-7.

⁵⁹ Schumburg's note prepared for Neurath on Weizsäcker's order, Berlin, August 17th, 1937—1526/373546-9.

60 Hentig's note, Berlin, January 7th, 1938—K868/K220349-50.

III. REPERCUSSIONS OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK CRISIS AND UNDERSTANDING WITH TURKEY

¹ Grobba to Woermann, Baghdad, May 2nd, 1939—DGFP, Ser. D, Vol. VI, London, 1956, no. 313, pp. 403-4.

² See H. D. Schmidt, 'The Nazi Party in Palestine and the Levant,' International

Affairs, London, 1952, pp. 460-9.

³ British Documents on Foreign Policy, 3rd Ser., Vol. V, London, 1952, nos. 415, 463, 468, 478, 481, 490, 491, 499, 500 and 503.

- ⁴ Ow-Wachendorf's letter, Cairo, February 18th, 1939—'Kriegsgerät Ägypten', DZA Potsdam AA, 68425.
- ⁵ See Wallace Murray's notes, Washington, December 2nd, 1937—FRUS 1937, Vol. II, Washington, 1954, pp. 921–6; Wadsworth to Secretary of State, Jerusalem, February 10th, 1938—FRUS 1938, Vol. II, Washington, 1955, pp. 899–901.
 - ⁶ Cmd. 5854.
 - 7 Cmd. 5893.
 - ⁸ J. C. Hurewitz, The Struggle for Palestine, New York, 1950, p. 97.
- ⁹ Cmd. 6019; the text of the White Paper appears also in J. C. Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, Vol. II, New York, 1956, pp. 218–26.

¹⁰ Seiler's report, Beirut, November 4th, 1938—K868/K220443-4.

- ¹¹ Hasenöhrl of the Propaganda Ministry to AA, Berlin, December 10th, 1937—K868/K220775.
- ¹² See Rosenberg's report on the activity of APA in 1938-43—007-PS, IMT, Vol. XXV, and the file 'Pol. VII Irak. Innere Politik, Parlaments- und Parteiwesen', Ser. no. K854.
 - ¹³ Great Britain and the East, October 13th, 1938.
- ¹⁴ Grobba's report, Baghdad, November 2nd, 1938—DGFP, Ser. D, Vol. V, Washington, 1953, no. 586, pp. 793-7.
 - ¹⁵ Sir Reader Bullard, The Camels Must Go, London, 1961, p. 212.
 - ¹⁶ Grobba's report, Baghdad, November 21st, 1937—1541/375439-40.
 - ¹⁷ Notes of July 23rd, 1938, entitled Saudisch-Arabien—1605H/385485-8.
- ¹⁸ W. O. Von Hentig, *Mein Leben*, eine Dienstreise, Göttingen, 1962, pp. 318-9.
- ¹⁹ Grobba's reports, Baghdad, November 9th, 1936, and January 7th, 1938—1541/375429 and 1605H/385467-73.
 - ²⁰ Grobba's report, Baghdad, November 21st, 1937—1541/375349–40.
 - ²¹ St. J. Philby, Arabian Jubilee, London, 1954, p. 108.
 - ²² Notes of July 23rd, 1938, entitled Saudisch-Arabien-1605H/385485-8.
- ²³ Hentig's notes, Berlin, August 27th, 1938—DGFP, Vol. V, no. 582, pp. 789-91.
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 - ²⁵ Hentig's notes, Berlin, August 27th, 1938—DGFP, Vol. V, no. 582.
 - ²⁶ Hentig's notes, Berlin, February 28th, 1939—ibid., no. 590, ρp. 810–11.
- ²⁷ Grobba to Woermann, Baghdad, May 2nd, 1939—DGFP, Vol. VI, no. 313, pp. 403-7.
- 313, pp. 403-7.

 ²⁸ Woermann to Malletke, Berlin, September 29th, 1938—DGFP, Vol. V, no. 585, p. 793.
 - ²⁹ Hentig's notes, Berlin, February 28th, 1939—ibid., no. 590, pp. 810-11.
- ³⁰ Notes of Hentig for Ribbentrop, Berlin, May 22nd, 1939—DGFP, Vol. VI, no. 422, pp. 555-6.
 - 31 Notes of July 23rd, 1938, entitled Saudisch-Arabien—1605H/385485-8.
- ³² Many documents, especially of September 3rd to September 29th, 1938, bear witness to APA interventions—1605H/385492-500.
- ³³ Woermann to Malletke, Berlin, September 29th, 1938—DGFP, Vol. V, no. 585, p. 793.
- ³⁴ Notes of Hentig for Ribbentrop, Berlin, May 22nd, 1939—DGFP, Vol. VI, no. 422, pp. 555-6.
 - 35 Unsigned notes, Berlin, September 30th, 1939—266/173558-60.
 - ³⁶ Hentig's notes, Berlin, February 28th, 1939—DGFP, Vol. V, no. 590.
- ³⁷ Secretary of State to the envoy in Egypt, Washington, May 24th, 1939; Knabenshue to Secretary of State, Baghdad, June 21st, 1939; Secretary of State to the President, Washington, June 30th, 1939; Secretary of State to the envoy

in Egypt, Washington, July 12th, 1939—FRUS, 1939, Vol. IV, Washington, 1955, pp. 824-9.

³⁸ Grobba's report, Jidda, January 27th, 1939—1605H/385507-9.

³⁹ Grobba's report with five enclosures, Jidda, February 18th, 1939—1605H/385522-54; the report and one of the enclosures appears in DGFP, Vol. V, no. 589, pp. 800-10.

⁴⁰ Grobba's report, Baghdad, March 7th, 1939—K863-K865/K219204-8.

⁴¹ Woermann to Grobba, Berlin, April 14th, 1939—DGFP, Vol. V, no. 592, pp. 813-14.

42 042/a/-TC, IMT, Vol. XXXIX.

⁴³ Grobba to Woermann, Baghdad, May 2nd, 1939—DGFP, Vol. VI, no. 313, pp. 403-7.

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no. 422, pp. 555-6.

⁴⁵ See Hentig's notes, Berlin, May 22nd, 1939—ibid., and Hentig's notes, Berlin, June 9th, 1939—1605H/385565-6

⁴⁶ Franz v. Papen, Memoirs, London, 1952, pp. 446-7.

⁴⁷ Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, London, 1947, p. 149; H. Knatchbull-Hugessen to Halifax, Ankara, May 18th, 1939—*British Documents on Foreign Policy*, 3rd Ser., Vol. V, no. 551.

48 Attolico to Ciano, Berlin, June 26th, 1939—IDDI, Ser. 8, Vol. XII, Rome,

1952, pp. 287-8.

- ⁴⁹ Hentig's notes, Berlin, June 20th, 1939—DGFP, Vol. VI, no. 541, pp. 743-4; W. O. v. Hentig, *Mein Leben*, eine Dienstreise, Göttingen, 1962, pp. 346-7.
 ⁵⁰ Text of Ibn Saud's message to Hitler—K863-K865/K219218-25.
 - ⁵¹ Schlobies's notes, Berlin, May 4th, 1939—1605H/385552-5.

⁵² Woermann's notes, Berlin, July 14th, 1939—71/51492-3.

53 Schlobies's notes, Berlin, May 4th, 1939—1605H/385552-5.

⁵⁴ Woermann's notation on Hentig's notes for Ribbentrop, Berlin, May 22nd, 1939—DGFP, Vol. VI, no. 422, p. 556.

⁵⁵ Woerman's notes, Berlin, May 22nd, 1939—1605H/385564.

⁵⁶ See Grobba's report, Jidda, January 27th, 1939—1605H/385507-9.

⁵⁷ Mackensen to AA, Rome, June 14th, 1939—1605H/385575-6.

58 Mackensen to AA, Rome, June 19th, 1939—K863-K865/K219264.

⁵⁹ AA to the Rome Embassy, Berlin, June 20th, 1939—K863-K865/K219249; Mackensen to AA, Rome, June 21st, 1939—K863-K865/K219262.

⁶⁰ Hentig's notation on Mackensen's despatch of June 19th, 1939—K863–K865/K219264; Hentig's notes, Berlin, June 20th, 1939—1605H/385605.

61 Ciano's Diary 1939-1943, London, 1947, note of May 22nd, 1939.

62 Woermann's notes, Berlin, July 14th, 1939—71/51492-3.

63 Hentig's notes, Berlin, June 20th, 1939—DGFP, Vol. VI, no. 541, p. 744; Hentig to Clodius, Berlin, June 22nd, 1939—1605H/385613-14.

⁶⁴ Hentig's notes, Berlin, July 1st, 1939—1605H/385618-20.

65 Unsigned notes, Berlin, July 4th, 1939—1605H/385623-4; Hentig's notes, Berlin, July 4th, 1939—1605H/385625-6.

66 Text of letter to al-Hud—1605H/385637-52.

67 Schlobies's notes, Berlin, July 15th, 1939—1605H/385636.

- ⁶⁸ Grobba's despatch and letter, Baghdad, June 20th, 1939—1605H/385602 and K853-K865/K219265-6.
- ⁶⁹ See Biuletyn Wewnetrzny PAT (Bulletin of the Polish Telegraphic Agency) [restricted] of July 26th, 1939—Archives of the Polish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, PIII W116 T11.
 - ⁷⁰ Grobba's despatch, Baghdad, K863-K865/K219270.
 - 71 Hentig's notes, Berlin, July 3rd, 1939—1605H/385621-2.

⁷² Unsigned and undated notes, Berlin (June 27th, 1939?)—1605H/385615–17.

⁷³ Hentig to Grobba, Berlin, June 24th, 1939—K863-K865/K219271.

IV. OUTBREAK OF WAR

¹ See Steger to Secretary of State, Jerusalem, September 4th, 1939—FRUS, 1939, Vol. IV, Washington, 1955, pp. 799–802; Mazzolini to Ciano, Alexandria, September 2nd, 1939—IDDI, Ser. 8, Vol. XIII, Rome, 1953, p. 363.

² See, for instance, Mazzolini to Ciano, Bulkeley, September 27th, 1939—IDDI, Ser. 9, Vol. I, Rome, 1954, pp. 283-4; Bastianini to Silitti, Rome, Septem-

ber 9th, 1939—ibid., p. 76.

- ³ Steger to Secretary of State, Jerusalem, September 4th, 1939—FRUS, 1939, loc. cit.
- ⁴ Army Council instructions to the G.O.C.-in-C. in the Middle East—Appendix I in I. S. O. Playfair, *The Mediterranean and the Middle East*, Vol. I, London, 1954, pp. 457-9.
- ⁵ Text of the October 19th, 1939, treaty with Turkey is printed in J. C. Hurewitz's *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, Vol. II, New York, 1956, pp. 226-8
 - ⁶ J. R. M. Butler, Grand Strategy, Vol. II, London, 1957, p. 15.

⁷ Ibid., p. 29.

8 Ibid., p. 64.

- ⁹ M. Gamelin, Servir, Vol. III, Paris, 1947, p. 206. The British opposed this dea.
 - 10 M. Weygand, Mémoires. Rappelé au Service, Paris, 1950, p. 21.

¹¹ J. M. Butler, op. cit., p. 69.

- ¹² See Die Geheimakten des französischen Generalstabes, Berlin, 1941, in particular nos. 19, 25-28, 34 and 38; P. Reynaud, Au coeur de la mêlée, Paris, 1951, pp. 368-74; Istoriya Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny Sovetskogo Soyuza, Vol. I, Moscow, 1960, p. 264-8.
- ¹³ Ciano to de Peppo (Ankara), Petrucci (Tehran), Quaroni (Kabul) and Gabrielli (Baghdad), Rome, October 4th, 1939—IDDI, Ser. 9, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 533; Gabrielli to Ciano, Baghdad, October 25th, 1939—IDDI, Ser. 9, Vol. II, Rome, 1957, p. 2; de Peppo to Ciano, Ankara, January 6th, 1940—IDDI, Ser. 9, Vol. III, Rome, 1959, p. 25.

¹⁴ Major-General H. Rowan-Robinson, Wavell in the Middle East, London,

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¹⁵See S. H. Longrigg, Syria and Lebanon under the French Mandate, London, 1958, pp. 295-8; A. H. Hourani, Syria and Lebanon, London, 1946, pp. 230-1.

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1939, Vol. IV, p. 808.

¹⁷ G. Kirk, The Middle East in the War, London, 1954, p. 231.

- ¹⁸ J. C. Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine*, New York, 1950, p. 117; *Magen b'seter*, Tel-Aviv, 1948; J. Bauer, *Reshito shel ha-palmah*, Zion, Vol. 26 (1960-1), pp. 103-31.
 - 19 Cmd. 6180.

²⁰ Kirk, op. cit., p. 34.

²¹ See *Daily Telegraph*, June 26th, 1940, and *The Times*, July 3rd, 1940; also J. Heyworth-Dunne, *Religious and Political Trends in Egypt*, Washington, 1950, p. 25.

²² Field-Marshal Lord Wilson of Libya, Eight Years Overseas 1939-1947,

London, 1950, p. 24.

²³ Anwar El Sadat, Revolt on the Nile, London, 1957, pp. 26–27.

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- ²⁵ Mazzolini to Ciano, Bulkeley, September 27th, 1939—IDDI, Ser. 9, Vol. I, pp. 283-4.
 - ²⁶ J. Marlowe, Anglo-Egyptian Relations 1800–1953, London, 1954, pp. 313–15.

²⁷ H. Rowan-Robinson, op. cit., p. 15.

²⁸ Wilson, op. cit., p. 25.

- ²⁹ Kirk, op. cit., p. 36; Mazzolini to Ciano, Bulkeley, September 27th, 1939— IDDI, Ser. 9, Vol. I, p. 283-4.
- ³⁰ Text of the Wafd memorandum appears in *Oriente Moderno*, May 1940, pp. 228-31; see Royal Institute of International Affairs, Great Britain and Egypt 1914-1951, London, 1952, p. 65.
- ³¹ According to C. J. Edmonds, active at that time in the Iraqi Ministry of Internal Affairs-M. Khadduri, Independent Iraq, London, 1960, p. 144 n.

³² Ibid., pp. 146-7.

33 Ibid., pp. 144 and 152.

³⁴ Gabrielli to Ciano, Baghdad, November 11th, 1939—IDDI, Ser. 9, Vol. II, pp. 187-8.

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36 Uthman Kemal Haddad, Harakat Rashid Ali el-Kilani 1941 sana, Sidon, 1950, p. 10-11.

³⁷ Salah ed-Din es-Sabbagh, Fursan al-uruba fi al-Iraq, Damascus, 1956,

pp. 110-11.

- 38 Al-Hud's letter to the German Ankara Ambassador, Riyadh, November 15th, 1939. Al-Hud requested to convey to Woermann a message accompanying this letter--647/255156-61.
- ³⁹ Silitti to Ciano, Jidda, February 22nd, 1940, and March 26th, 1940—IDDI, Ser. 9, Vol. III, pp. 304 and 536-7; Ciano to Silitti, Rome, April 3rd, 1940ibid., p. 596.

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⁴¹ Generaloberst Halder, Kriegstagebuch. Band I. Vom Polenfeldzug bis zum Ende der Westoffensive (14.8.1939-30.6.1940), Stuttgart, 1962, p. 24 (note of August 22nd, 1939).

⁴² Ibid., pp. 133-4 (notes of November 26th and 29th, 1939).

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- ⁴⁴ Schulenburg to AA, Moscow, November 14th and 18th, 1939—DGFP, Ser. D, Vol. VIII, Washington, 1954, nos. 353 and 369, pp. 404 and 419.

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⁴⁶ DGFP, Vol. VIII, no. 514, pp. 631-3.

⁴⁷ Halder, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 210 (note of February 26th, 1940).

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 256 (note of April 12th, 1940).

⁴⁹ Playfair, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 49.

⁵⁰ Führer's directive, Berlin, April 4th, 1940—DGFP, Ser. D, Vol. IX, Washington 1956, no. 46, pp. 76-78.

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⁵² Unsigned notes, Berlin, September 30th, 1939—266/173558-60; see also Attolico to Ciano, Berlin, September 5th, 1939—IDDI, Ser. 9, Vol. I, pp. 28–29.

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56 Ibid.

⁵⁷ Woermann's notes, Berlin, September 20th, 1939—266/173533.

⁵⁸ Albrecht's letter to Reichsführer S.S., Berlin, September 30th, 1939—266/173555.

⁵⁹ Habicht's notes on Ribbentrop's instructions on the treatment of Egyptian subjects, Berlin, December 4th, 1939—345/200197-8.

V. THE FALL OF FRANCE AND THE DECLARATION OF OCTOBER 23RD-DECEMBER 5TH, 1940

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² Hare to the Secretary of State, Cairo, June 2nd, 1940—FRUS, 1940, Vol.

III, Washington, 1958, pp. 467-8.

³ Mazzolini to Ciano, Cairo, May 14th, 1940—IDDI, Ser. 9, Vol. IV, Rome, 1960, p. 412.

⁴ De Peppo to Ciano, Ankara, May 30th, 1940—ibid., pρ. 501 and 503-4;

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⁵ Hare to the Secretary of State, Cairo, June 2nd, 1940—FRUS, 1940, op. cit.; Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Great Britain and Egypt 1914–1951*, London, 1952, p. 63.

⁶ Hare to the Secretary of State, Cairo, June 11th, 1940—FRUS, 1940, op. cit., p. 468.

- ⁷ Hare to the Secretary of State, Cairo, June 14th, 1940—ibid., p. 463.
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⁹ Great Britain and Egypt, p. 64.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 65.

¹¹ Anwar El Sadat, Revolt on the Nile, London, 1957, pp. 24-25.

¹² M. Khadduri, *Independent Iraq*, London, 1960, p. 161; see also Knabenshue to the Secretary of State, Baghdad, May 29th, 1940—FRUS, 1940, op. cit.,

pp. 703–6.

- ¹³ U. K. Haddad, *Harakat Rashid Ali el-Kilani*, Sidon, 1950, p. 16; Papen to Ribbentrop, Tarabya, October 3rd, 1940—DGFP, Ser. D, Vol. XI, London, 1961, no. 146, p. 242. This problem is extensively discussed in M. Khadduri's 'General Nuri's Flirtations with the Axis Powers', *The Middle East Journal*, 1962, pp. 328–36.
- ¹⁴ Knabenshue to the Secretary of State, Baghdad, November 11th, 1940—FRUS, 1940, op. cit., p. 713.

¹⁵ See Freya Stark, East Is West, London, 1945, p. 143.

- ¹⁶ S. H. Longsigg, *Iraq 1900–1950*, London, 1953, p. 284.
 ¹⁷ Palestine Government, *A Survey of Palestine*, Jerusalem, 1946, Vol. I,
- pp. 58-60.

¹⁸ Khadduri, op. cit., pp. 177-8.

¹⁹ Erdmannsdorff to AA, Budapest, July 1st, 1940—83/61497.

²⁰ An English translation of the Mufti's letter is printed in DGFP, Ser. D, Vol. X, Washington, 1957, no. 125, pp. 143-4.

²¹ Papen to AA, Tarabya, July 6th, 1940—ibid., pp. 141-3.

- ²² Woermann's notes, Berlin, July 21st, 1940—ibid., no. 200, pp. 261-2.
- ²³ Ettel's despatch, Tehran, August 15th, 1940—83/61499; see also Woermann's notes, Berlin, August 17th, 1940—ibid., no. 359, p. 503.

²⁴ The text of the Italian declaration in English and an Arab translation is cited by Haddad, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

²⁵ Gabrielli to Ciano, Baghdad, May 25th, 1940—IDDI, op. cit., p. 452.

²⁶ Playfair, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 187.

²⁷ Knabenshue to the Secretary of State, Baghdad, June 28th, 1940—FRUS, 1940, op. cit., p. 709.

²⁸ J. C. Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine*, New York, 1950, pp. 149–50. Nuri es-Said's memorandum of December 15th, 1940—*Iraq Times*, November 21st, 1941.

²⁹ Khadduri, op. cit., p. 171.

30 Nuri es-Said's memorandum—Iraq Times, November 21st, 1941.

31 Hurewitz, op. cit., p. 115.

³² Papen's report, Tarabya, August 6th, 1940—DGFP, Vol. X, no. 289, pp. 415–16. Haddad has been called by mistake in this report 'the secretary of the Grand Mufti of Baghdad'.

33 Haddad, op. cit., p. 27.

³⁴ Grobba's notes, Berlin, August 27th, 1940—DGFP, Vol. X, no 403, pp. 556-9; Haddad, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

35 Papen to AA, Tarabya, September 10th, 1940—71/50707.

³⁶ See Jodl's memorandum of June 30th, 1940, entitled *Die Weiterführung des Krieges gegen England*—1776-PS, IMT, Vol. XXVIII; Enno v. Rintelen, *Mussolini als Bundesgenosse*, Tübingen and Stuttgart, 1951, p. 95.

37 Halder, Kriegstagebuch, Vol. II, Stuttgart, 1963, pp. 49-50 (note of July

31st, 1940).

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 72 (note of August 21st, 1940), 82 (note of September 5th, 1940), 100 (note of September 15th, 1940) and 113 (note of September 26th, 1940).

³⁹ Ibid., p. 110 (note of September 23rd, 1940).

40 Haddad, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

⁴¹ Ibid., Papen to AA, Tarabya, October 3rd, 1940—DGFP, Vol. XI, no. 146, p. 242.

⁴² Haddad, op. cit., p. 37.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 33-34.

⁴⁴ Papen to AA, Tarabya, October 3rd, 1940—DGFP, Vol. XI, no. 146, p. 242.

⁴⁵ Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, London, 1948, pp. 373-4; Ciano's Diary 1939-1943, London, 1947, note of June 19th-20th, 1940.

⁴⁶ L. Simoni, Berlin. Ambassade d'Italie, Paris, 1947, p. 169; Rintelen, op.

cit., p. 102.

⁴⁷ Schmidt's notes on the conversation between Hitler and Ciano, Berlin, July 8th, 1940—DGFP, Vol. X, no. 129, pp. 147-55; Mackensen to AA, Rome, July 17th, 1940—ibid., no. 193, p. 252; E. Wiskemann, The *Rome-Berlin Axis*, London, 1949, p. 217.

48 Ciano's Diary, note of July 2nd, 1940.

⁴⁹ Rintelen, op. cit., pp. 101-2.

⁵⁰ Survey of International Affairs 1939–1946, *Hitler's Europe*, London, 1954, p. 284; Halder, op. cit., p. 302 (note of March 4th, 1941).

⁵¹ Woermann's notes, Berlin, July 21st, 1940—DGFP, Vol. X, no. 200, pp.

261–2.

⁵² Text of the circular in DGFP, Vol. X, no. 370, pp. 515-16.

53 Woermann's notes, Berlin, July 21st, 1940—ibid., no. 200, pp. 261-2.

⁵⁴ Papen to AA, Tarabya, August 12th, 1940—83/61498.

⁵⁵ Playfair, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 108; Rintelen, op. cit., p. 100.

- 56 Ciano's Diary, note of September 28th, 1940; Rintelen, op. cit., p. 102.
- ⁵⁷ Weizsäcker to Mackensen, Berlin, September 9th, 1940—DGFP, Vol. XI, no. 35, pp. 44-46.

⁵⁸ Mackensen to Weizsäcker, Rome, September 10th, 1940—ibid., no. 40, pp. 48–49.

⁵⁹ Mackensen to AA, Rome, September 14th, 1940—ibid., no. 58, pp. 75-76. ⁶⁰ Papen to AA, Tarabya, September 10th, 1940—71/50707; Weizsäcker to Mackensen, Berlin, September 12th, 1940—ibid., no. 51, pp. 65-66.

- 61 Mackensen to AA, Rome, September 14th 1940—ibid., no. 57, pp. 74-77.
- ⁶² Völkischer Beobachter, December 6th, 1940. and *Oriente Moderno*, December 1940; English translation in DGFP, Vol. XI, no. 190, pp. 320-1.
 - 68 Weizsäcker to Mackensen, Berlin, October 6th, 1940—ibid., no. 160, p. 268.
 - 64 Papen to AA, Tarabya, October 3rd, 1940—ibid., no. 146, p. 241.

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66 Text of the Tripartite Pact in DGFP, Vol. XI, no. 118, pp. 204-5.

67 Haddad, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

- 68 Grobba's notes, Berlin, September 30th, 1940—DGFP, Vol. XI, no. 134, pp. 228-9.
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⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 50.

71 Weizsäcker's notes, Berlin, October 21st, 1940—71/50727-30.

72 G. Kirk, The Middle East in the War, London, 1954, p. 64.

- 73 See collection of AA documents entitled 'Arabien'—esp. 71/50737-41.
- ⁷⁴ Papen to AA, Ankara, December 5th, 1940—71/50743; Melchers's notes, Berlin, December 11th, 1940—DGFP, Vol. XI, no. 496, pp. 846–7.
 - ⁷⁵ Papen to AA, Ankara, January 2nd, 1941—ibid, no. 596, pp. 1004-5.

76 Text not found.

⁷⁷ Khadduri, op. cit., pp. 187–8.

⁷⁸ Weizsäcker's notes, Berlin, October 21st, 1940—71/50727-30; Haddad, op. cit., p. 48.

79 Khalid al-Hud to Woermann, ar-Riyadh, 12th of Muharram 1360 (Febru-

ary 8th, 1941)—647/255150-1.

⁸⁰ Letter signed by: Asad Hazim, Anis Saghir, Ahmed Dauq, Ali Nasr ed-Din, Muhammed Ali Beyham, Constantin Jenni; see Grobba's notes, Berlin, February 15th, 1941—647/255058-9.

81 The Arab text of the letter and the German translation are in 647/255093-

102.

82 Haddad, op. cit., pp. 49-54.

- 83 Ibid., p. 50; Bismarck to AA, Rome, November 15th, 1940—DGFP, Vol. XI, no. 342. pp. 586-7.
- 84 Haddad, op. cit., p. 54; Bismarck to AA, Rome, November 15th, 1940—DGFP, Vol. XI, no. 342.

VI. IRAQ-ON THE EVE OF REBELLION

- ¹ See Kurt von Tippelskirch, Geschichte des zweiten Weltkrieges, Bonn, 1951, p. 131.
- ² Memorandum of the Naval Staff of October 14th, 1940, on the situation in the Mediterranean—Führer Conferences on Matters Dealing with the German Navy 1940.

[§] According to notes of Vice-Admiral Kurt Assmann entitled *Die Skl. und die Vorgeschichte des Feldzuges gegen Russland*—170-C, IMT, Vol. XXXIV.

⁴ Halder, Kriegstagebuch, Vol. II, pp. 151-3 (notes of October 26th, 27th and 28th, 1940).

⁵ Ibid., pp. 160-2.

⁶ J. R. M. Butler, Grand Strategy, Vol. II, London, 1957, p. 359.

⁷ Ibid., p. 386.

⁸ Halder, op. cit., pp. 149-50.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 163-4.

¹⁰ B. H. Liddell Hart, The Other Side of the Hill, London, 1948, pp. 163-6.

¹¹ Tippelskirch, op. cit., p. 131. ¹² 444-PS, IMT, Vol. XXVI.

- ¹³ Butler, op. cit., p. 387.
- ¹⁴ W. S. Churchill, The Second World War, Vol. II, London, 1951, p. 544.
- ¹⁵ Hitler to Mussolini, Vienna, November 20th, 1940—Les Lettres secrètes échangées par Hitler et Mussolini, Paris, 1946, pp. 81–92, or 2762–PS, IMT, Vol. XXXI.
 - ¹⁶ Tippelskirch, op. cit., p. 144.
 - ¹⁷ Churchill, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 374-9.
- ¹⁸ Halder, op. ĉit., Vol. II, p. 266 (note of December 13th, 1940); Tippelskirch, op, cit., p. 151.
- ¹⁹ L. Simoni, Berlin. L'ambassade d'Italie, Paris, 1947, p. 222; E. Wiskemann, The Rome-Berlin Axis, London, 1949, p. 243.
- ²⁰ Vorentwurf eines Vortrags Jodls vor den Gauleitern in München am 7.11.1943 über die Kriegslage—172-L, IMT, Vol. XXXVII.
- ²¹ E. von Rintelen, *Mussolini als Bundesgenosse*, Tübingen and Stuttgart, 1951, pp. 112-13.
 - ²² Îbid., p. 115.
 - ²³ Ugo Cavallero, Comando Supremo, Bologna, 1948, pp. 26-27.
 - ²⁴ Rintelen, op. cit., p. 120.
 - ²⁵ Les Lettres secrètes . . ., pp. 103-13.
- ²⁸ Führer Conferences . . . 1940; W. Langer and S. Gleason, The Undeclared War, New York, 1953, p. 112.
- ²⁷ Notes on conversation between Keitel and Guzzoni of January 19th, 1941, and on Hitler's conversation with Mussolini on January 19th, 1941—134-C, IMT, Vol. XXXIV.
 - ²⁸ Halder, op. cit., Vol II, p. 253 (notes of January 26th, 1941).
- ²⁹ OKW Besprechung bei Hitler am 3.2.1941 (OKW conference with Hitler on February 3rd, 1941)—872-PS, IMT, Vol. XXVI.
 - 30 Halder, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 254.
 31 OKW Besprechung . . ., loc. cit.
 - 32 E. Rommel, Krieg ohne Hass, Heidenheim, 1950, p. 12.
 - 33 Ibid.
 - ³⁴ Anwar El Sadat, Revolt on the Nile, London, 1957, pp. 24–25.
- ³⁵ Palmer to Secretary of State, Beirut, September 20th, and October 23rd, 1940—FRUS, 1940, Vol. III, Washington, 1958, pp. 909–11 and 920–2.
- ³⁶ Kroll's notes on conversation with Italian Ambassador de Peppo, Istanbul, October 23rd, 1940—4759/E234159-60.
- ³⁷ Palmer to Secretary of State, Beirut, October 23rd, 1940—FRUS, op. cit., pp. 920-2.
- ³⁸ See Melchers's notes, Berlin, November 27th, 1940—647/255223-6; numerous letters of Paula Koch to Hentig—AA file entitled 'Nachlass v. Hentig. Länder des Vorderen Orient 1939–1942', Ser. no. 4744; Reshad Barbir's notes, Istanbul, September 7th, 1940—4759/E234161-70. Barbir was DNB representative.
- ³⁹ See Welck's notes, Wiesbaden, March 13th, 1941—3864H/E045240; S. H. Longrigg, Syria and Lebanon under the French Mandate, London, 1958, pp. 301–3; Geo London, L'Amiral Estéva et le général Dentz devant la Haute Cour de Justice, Lyons, 1945, p. 197.
 - ⁴⁰ U. K. Haddad, Harakat Rashid Ali el-Kilani, Sidon, 1950, pp. 45-46.
- ⁴¹ Halder, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 151 (notes of October 26th, 1940); Langer and Gleason, op. cit., pp. 114-15.
 - ⁴² Butler, op. cit., pp. 372–3.
- ⁴³ General Catroux's notes of May 5th, 1941, cited in G. Catroux, Dans la bataille de la Méditerranée, Paris, 1949, p. 119.
 - 44 Grobba's notes, Berlin, March 1st, 1941—647/255188-90; Woermann's

notes, Berlin, December 29th, 1940—DGFP, Ser. D, Vol. XI, London, 1961, no. 578, pp. 976-7.

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46 G. I. Mirski, Irak v smutnoe vremya, Moscow, 1961, p. 152.

47 I. S. O. Playfair, The Mediterranean and the Middle East, Vol. II, London,

1956, p. 178.

- ⁴⁸ Knabenshue to Secretary of State, Baghdad, November 27th and December 2nd, 1940—FRUS, op. cit., pp. 714–16; Woermann's notes, Berlin, December 9th, 1940—DGFP, Vol. XI, no. 432, pp. 829–31.
- ⁴⁹ Woermann's notes, Berlin, December 29th, 1940—ibid., no. 578, pp. 976-7; Cordell Hull's instructions—FRUS, op. cit., pp. 716-17; see M. Khadduri, *Independent Iraq*, London, 1960, p. 195.

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2nd, 1941—FRUS, 1941, Vol. III, Washington, 1959, p. 486.

⁵¹ Knabenshue to Secretary of State, Baghdad, December 18th, 1940—FRUS, 1940, Vol. III, p. 723.

⁵² U.K. Ambassador to the Department of State, Washington, January 6th, 1941—FRUS, 1941, Vol. III, pp. 487–8.

⁵³ Woermann's notes, Berlin, December 29th, 1940—DGFP, Vol. XI, no. 578, pp. 976-7.

⁵⁴ Salah ed-Din es-Sabbagh, Fursan al-uruba fi al-Iraq, Damascus, 1956, pp.

114-16.

- ⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 114.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 114.
- ⁵⁷ Haddad, op. cit., p. 75.
- ⁵⁸ Es-Sabbagh, op. cit., p. 149.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 155.

⁶⁰ Woermann's notes, Berlin, January 3rd, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XI, no. 601, pp. 1012-13; Khadduri, op. cit., pp. 199-201.

61 Khadduri, loc. cit.; Woermann's notes, Berlin, January 3rd, 1941—DGFP,

Vol. XI, no. 601.

62 M. Khadduri, Independent Iraq, London, 1951, p. 159; M. Khadduri, Independent Iraq, London, 1960, p. 197.

⁶³ Freya Stark, East Is West, London, 1945, pp. 139 and 142.

64 Es-Sabbagh, op. cit., p. 140.

- ⁶⁵ Woermann's notes, Berlin, December 9th, 1940—DGFP, Vol. XI, no. 482, pp. 829–31; Woermann's notes, Berlin, December 16th, 1940—83/61523-4.
- ⁶⁶ Woermann's notes, Berlin, December 23rd, 1940—83/61526–2; es-Sabbagh, op. cit., p. 140.

⁶⁷ Haddad, op. cit., pp. 82-84; Khadduri, op. cit., p. 189.

68 Woermann's notes, Berlin, January 24th, 1941—647/255208-9.

⁶⁹ Rintelen's notes, Berlin, January 14th, 1941—71/50747.

⁷⁰ Haddad, op. cit., p. 83.

71 Text of the Mufti's letter, DGFP, Vol. XI, no. 680, pp. 1151-5.

⁷² Text of the draft declaration in 647/255192-4.

⁷³ See above, pp. 83-4, and DGFP, Vol. X, no. 403, pp. 559-60.

VII. THE GERMANS AND THE IRAQ REVOLT

- ¹ Weizsäcker's notes on conversation with Canaris, Berlin, August 8th, 1940 —647/255228.
- ² Melchers's notes, Berlin (not later than December 9th, 1940)—DGFP, Ser. D, Vol. XI, London, 1961, no. 481, pp. 826-9.

- ³ Woermann's notes on conversation with von Ribbentrop, Berlin, December 24th, 1940—647/255212.
- ⁴ Text of Woermann's instructions to von Hentig, Berlin, December 31st, 1940—647/255211-12; see also W. O. von Hentig, *Mein Leben. Eine Dienstreise*, Göttingen, 1962, p. 337.
- ⁵ See G. London, L'Amiral Estéva et le général Dentz devant la Haute Cour de Justice, Lyons, 1945, p. 197; S. H. Longrigg, Syria and Lebanon under the French Mandate, London, 1958, p. 301; Hentig, op. cit., p. 338.
- ⁶ Palmer to the Secretary of State, Beirut, October 3rd, 1940—FRUS, 1940, Vol. III, Washington, 1958, pp. 920–2.

⁷ Hentig's notes, Berlin, February 7th, 1941—647/255229-32.

8 Grobba's notes, Berlin, February 7th, 1941—792/273145-6; Woermann's notes to Ribbentrop, Berlin, February 7th, 1941—792/273141-4.

9 Woermann's notes, Berlin, January 27th, 1941-83/61540.

- Woermann's notes, Berlin, February 7th, 1941—83/61542-4; see U. K. Haddad, Harakat Rashid Ali al-Kilani, Sidon, 1950, p. 82.
- ¹¹ Woermann's notes on conversation with Ribbentrop, Berlin, February 4th, 1941—DGFP, Ser. D, Vol. XII, Washington, 1962, no. 12, pp. 18-19.
- ¹² Ripken's notes, Berlin, March 6th, 1941—83/61550-2; DGFP, Ser. D, Vol. VIII, Washington, 1954, no. 163, pp. 163-9.

¹³ Woermann's notes, Berlin, December 23rd, 1940—83/61526-7.

- ¹⁴ Woermann's notes, Berlin, February 4th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 12, pp. 18–19.
- ¹⁵ Japanese Embassy memorandum, Berlin (probably March 5th, 1941)—792/273158; see G. I. Mirski, *Irak w smutnoie vremya*, Moscow, 1961, p. 152.
- ¹⁶ Woermann's notes, Berlin, March 5th and 24th, 1941—792/273137 and 792/273129.

¹⁷ Ott's despatch, Tokyo, May 5th, 1941—83/61636.

- ¹⁸ Grobba's notes, Berlin, December 20th, 1940, and January 13th, 1941—792/273159-64.
- ¹⁹ Woermann's memorandum for Ribbentrop, Berlin, February 7th, 1941—792/273141-4; Haddad, op. cit., p. 87.
 - ²⁰ 1746–PS, IMT, Vol. XXVIII.
 - ²¹ Ripken's notes, Berlin, March 6th, 1941—83/61550-2.
- ²² According to information received by Ettel, German envoy at Iran, from the Premier of that country: Woermann's notes, Berlin, February 7th, 1941—792/273141-4.
 - 23 Ibid.
 - ²⁴ Ripken's notes, Berlin, March 6th, 1941—83/61550-2.
 - ²⁵ Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 21st, 1941—83/61121-3.
 - ²⁶ Woermann's notes, Berlin, February 7th, 1941—792/273141-4.
 - ²⁷ Grobba's notes, Berlin, February 9th, 1941—647/255061-2.
- ²⁸ See Winston Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. III, London, 1950, Ch. VI.
 - ²⁹ Woermann's notes, Berlin, January 24th, 1941—647/255208-9.
 - 30 Text: 83/61545-6.
- ³¹ Woermann's notes on conversation with Cosmelli of the Italian Embassy, Berlin, February 21st, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 68, p. 121.
 - ³² Woermann's notes, Berlin, March 24th, 1941—83/61553.
- ³³ Ibid.; memorandum undated (beginning of March 1941) and without signature (Hentig?)—647/255079-83.
 - ³⁴ Woermann's notes, February 4th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 12, pp. 18–19.
- 35 Canaris's opinion according to Grobba's notes, Berlin, February 9th, 1941—647/255061-2; see also in notes undated (February 1941?) and without

signature—647/255063-4; OKW memorandum of February 5th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 18, pp. 30-32.

36 Haddad, op. cit., pp. 87-88 and 92-93.

- ³⁷ Woermann's notes, Berlin, February 26th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 92, pp. 168-9.
- ³⁸ Woermann's memorandum, Berlin, March 7th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 133, pp. 234-43.
- ³⁹ Memorandum unsigned (Hentig?) and undated (beginning of March 1941) —647/255079-83.
 - ⁴⁰ Text of the Three Power Pact, 2643-PS, IMT, Vol. XXXI.
- ⁴¹ Welck to AA, Wiesbaden, July 15th, 1940—DGFP, Ser. D, Vol. X, Washington, 1957, no. 169, p. 215.

⁴² Hencke to AA, Wiesbaden, July 22nd, 1940—DGFP, Vol. X, no. 208, p.

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- ⁴³ Papen's notes, Berlin, November 6th, 1940—DGFP, Vol. XI, no. 297, p. 482.
- ⁴⁴ Abetz's despatch on conversation with Fuad Hamza, Saudi Arabian envoy, Paris, March 8th, 1941—71/50809-10.

⁴⁵ Text 446-PS, IMT, Vol. XXVI.

⁴⁶ G. L. Weinberg, Germany and the Soviet Union 1939-41, Leiden, 1954, pp. 138-9, 149-50.

⁴⁷ See DGFP, Vol. XI, pp. 508–10, 537, 555, 565–7, 714–15.

⁴⁸ 444-PS, IMT, Vol. XXVI.

⁴⁹ Text—647/255083.

- ⁵⁰ Weizsäcker's notes, Berlin, March 12th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 159, p. 284-5.
- ⁵¹ Schulenburg to Ribbentrop, Moscow, November 26th, 1940—DGFP, Vol. XI, no. 404, pp. 714–15.

⁵² E. von Weizsäcker, *Erinnerungen*, Munich, 1950, p. 306.

⁵³ Schulenburg to AA, Moscow, January 17th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XI, no. 669, pp. 1124-5.

⁵⁴ Rintelen's dispatch, Sonderzug, March 20th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no.

188, pp. 323-5.

- ⁵⁵ Woermann's notes, Berlin, February 26th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 92, pp. 168-9.
- ⁵⁶ Rintelen's notes, Sonderzug, March 20th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 188, pp. 323-5.
 - ⁵⁷ See memorandum undated and without signature—647/255079-83.
 - ⁵⁸ Rühle's notes for Ribbentrop, Berlin, May 5th, 1941—647/255068-73.
- ⁵⁹ According to Woermann's memorandum, Berlin, March 7th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, 234-43, and appendix 6 to that memorandum—71/50791-2.
- ⁶⁰ Rintelen's notes, Sonderzug, March 20th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 188, pp. 323-5.
 - 61 Woermann's notes, Berlin, March 26th, 1941—71/50834-6.
 - 62 Text of Canaris's notes—792/273126.
 - 63 List of the above—71/50827-8.

VIII. UPRISING IN IRAQ

- ¹ Salah ed-Din es-Sabbagh, Fursan al-uruba fi al-Iraq, Damascus, 1956, pp. 202-3.
 - ² U.K. Haddad, Harakat Rashid Ali el-Kilani, Sidon, 1950, p. 145.
 - ³ M. Petersen, Both Sides of the Curtain, London, 1950, p. 145.
 - ⁴ Es-Sabbagh, op. cit., Pt. III, Ch. XI, pp. 207–11.

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⁵ Ibid., p. 215.

- ⁶ Haddad, op. cit., p. 100; M. Khadduri, *Independent Iraq*, London, 1960, pp. 208-9.
- ⁷ See S. H. Longrigg, *Iraq 1900 to 1950*, London, 1953, p. 287. Rashid Ali and his followers wanted to appear in public as the 'People's Party'.

⁸ Es-Sabbagh, op. cit., pp. 126 and 218.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 219–20.

- ¹⁰ Knabenshue to the Secretary of State, Baghdad, April 2nd, 1941—FRUS, 1941, Vol. III, Washington, 1959, pp. 491–2; *Paiforce, The Story of the Persia and Iraq Command*, London, HMSO, 1948, p. 18; Freya Stark, *East Is West*, London, 1945, p. 139.
- ¹¹ According to Khadduri, op. cit., pp. 211-12. The reports of the Baghdad envoys of Iran (Ettel to AA, Tehran, April 8th, 1941—83/61558) and of Italy (Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 4th, 1941—83/61571) supplement Khadduri's account with a few particulars.
- ¹² J. R. M. Butler, Grand Strategy, Vol. II, London, HMSO, 1957, pp. 574-6; W. S. Churchill, The Second World War, Vol. III, London, 1950, p. 62.

¹³ Papen's despatch, Ankara, April 4th, 1941—83/61555.

¹⁴ Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 8th, 1941—83/61560.

¹⁵ Grobba's notes, Berlin, April 4th, 1941—792/273119.

¹⁶ The German envoy at Tehran was being informed on the Japanese envoy's reports from Baghdad—Ettel to AA, Tehran, April 3rd, 1941—83/61574.

¹⁷ Erdmannsdorff to AA, Budapest, April 10th, 1941—266/173590-1.

- ¹⁸ A German translation of the Italian envoy's report is appended to Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 19th, 1941—83/61098–100.
- ¹⁹ Hare to the Secretary of State, Cairo, March 3rd, 1941—FRUS, 1941, op. cit., p. 489.
- ²⁶ Knabenshue to the Secretary of State, Baghdad, March 11th, 25th and 28th, 1941—ibid., pp. 490–1.

²¹ Es-Sabbagh, op. cit., p. 213.

²² Ibid., p. 288.

²³ Ibid., p. 222; Khadduri, op. cit., pp. 210-11.

²⁴ Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 8th, 1941—83/61560.

- ²⁵ According to the Italian envoy's report, Baghdad, April 8th, 1941—792/272924; see also es-Sabbagh, op. cit., p. 231.
 - ²⁶ T. E. Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, London, 1935, p. 142.

²⁷ Khadduri, op. cit., p. 214; Haddad, op. cit., p. 106.

²⁸ The Italian envoy's report, Baghdad, April 9th, 1941—792/272927.

- ²⁹ Anwar El Sadat, Revolt on the Nile, London, 1957, pp. 37-38; G. Kirk, The Middle East in the War, London, 1954, p. 200.
- ³⁰ Knabenshue to the Secretary of State, Baghdad, April 6th, 1941—FRUS, 1941, op. cit., p. 493.

³¹ J. R. M. Butler, op. cit., p. 462.

³² Roosevelt to Churchill, May 1st, 1941—cited in W. L. Langer and S. E. Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, New York, 1953, pp. 416–17.

33 Churchill, op. cit., Vol. III, Ch. XX.

³⁴ J. F. C. Fuller, *The Second World War 1939-45*, London, 1948, p. 115.

³⁵ Butler, op. cit., p. 460.

36 I. S. O. Playfair, The Mediterranean and the Middle East, Vol. II, London, HMSO, 1956, p. 178; Churchill, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 227-8.

⁸⁷ Churchill, ibid., p. 227.

- 38 See the Italian envoy's report, Baghdad, April 4th, 1941-83/61099-100.
- 39 Knabenshue to the Secretary of State, Baghdad, April 11th and 16th—FRUS, 1941, op. cit., pp. 499 and 500.

- ⁴⁰ Foreign Office to the Embassy in Washington, London, April 17th, 1941—ibid., p. 501; Bismarck to AA, Rome, April 19th, 1941—DGFP, Ser. D, Vol. XII, London, HMSO, 1962, no. 372, pp. 587–8; Kroll to Ribbentrop, Ankara, April 21st, 1941—83/61127; Khadduri, op. cit., p. 219.
- ⁴¹ Foreign Office to the Embassy in Washington, London, April 17th, 1941—op. cit.
 - 42 Ibid.
- ⁴³ According to the Italian envoy's reports from Baghdad cited in: Bismarck to AA, Rome, April 19th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 372; Italian Embassy notes, Berlin, April 19th, 1941—83/61102-3; Bismarck's despatch, Rome, April 21st, 1941—83/61116-17.
 - 44 Khadduri, op. cit., p. 219; Haddad, op. cit., p. 109.
 - ⁴⁵ Churchill, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 225-6.
- ⁴⁶ According to the Japanese Baghdad envoy's estimates—Ettel's despatch, Tehran, April 24th, 1941—83/61607.
- ⁴⁷ According to the Italian Baghdad envoy's estimates—Bismarck to AA, Rome, April 19th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 372; the Italian envoy's report of April 23rd, 1941, on conversation with el-Kilani and the Mufti—Mackensen's despatch, Rome, April 25th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 401, pp. 634–5.

48 Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 26th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 407,

pp. 641–2.

- ⁴⁹ Italian envoy's report, Baghdad, April 23rd, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 401.
 - ⁵⁰ Playfair, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 181.
 - ⁵¹ Churchill, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 225-6.
 - ⁵² Transozean Agency, April 23rd, 1941.
 - ⁵³ Khadduri, op. cit., p. 220.
 - ⁵⁴ Kroll to Ribbentrop, Ankara, April 21st, 1941—83/61127.
 - ⁵⁵ Ibid
 - ⁵⁶ Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 24th, 1941—83/61132-4.
 - ⁵⁷ The Italian Embassy's notes, Berlin, April 9th, 1941—83/61545-6.
- ⁵⁸ Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 9th and 12th, 1941—83/61545-6, and DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 322, pp. 526-7.
 - ⁵⁹ Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 10th, 1941—83/61566.
- ⁶⁰ Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 19th, 1941—83/61097; the Italian Embassy's notes, Berlin, April 19th, 1941—83/61102–3.
 - 61 Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 19th, 1941-83/61104-5.
 - 62 Mackensen's despatch, Rome, April 23rd, 1941-83/61600.
 - 63 See Falsifikatory istorii, Moscow, 1948, p. 64.
 - 64 Bismarck to AA, Rome, April 29th, 1941—83/61618-20.
 - 65 Churchill, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 319.
- 66 Notiz für den Führer, Vienna, April 27th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 415, op. 655-6.
- 67 Meldung für den Führer, Vienna, April 21st, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 377, pp. 592-4; Ribbentrop to the Embassy in Ankara, Special train, April 21st, 1941—83/61591.
 - 68 Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 10th, 1941—83/61566.
 - 69 Ripken's notes, Berlin, April 17th, 1941—792/273071-3.
 - ⁷⁰ Grobba's notes, Berlin, April 23rd, 1941—792/273021-4.
 - 71 Ibid.
 - 72 Woermann to the Tokyo Embassy, Berlin, April 21st, 1941—792/273046.
 - ⁷³ Ott's despatch, Toyko, May 3rd, 1941—83/61636.
- ⁷⁴ See Woermann's notes, Berlin, February 7th, 1941—792/273141-4; *Meldung für den Führer*, Vienna, April 21st, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 377.

- ⁷⁵ Ripken's notes, Berlin, April 17th, 1941—792/273071-3.
- ⁷⁶ Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 21st, 1941—83/611221-3.
- ⁷⁷ Grobba's notes, Berlin, April 22nd, 1941—792/273032-5.
- ⁷⁸ Grobba's notes, Berlin, April 23rd, 1941—792/273021-4.
- ⁷⁹ Woermann to Ettel, Berlin, May 6th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 466, pp. 726-8.
 - 80 Ettel's despatch, Tehran, May 6th, 1941—792/272876-9.
 - 81 Notiz für den Führer, Vienna, April 27th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 415.
 - 82 See above—Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 19th, 1941—83/61104-5.
- 83 Meldung für den Führer, Vienna, April 21st, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 377.
- ⁸⁴ Kramarz's notes on status of military support for Iraq, Berlin, May 16th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 528, pp. 833-5.
 - 85 Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 10th, 1941—83/61566.
 - 86 General Jeschonnek's answer, Vienna, April 21st, 1941—83/61115.
 - 87 Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 24th, 1941-83/61135-6.
- 88 Meldung für den Führer, Vienna, April 21st, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 377.
 - 89 Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 24th, 1941-83/61135-6.
- ⁹⁰ Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 26th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 407, pp. 641-2.
 - 91 Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 26th, 1941—83/61141.
 - 92 Notiz für den Führer, Vienna, April 27th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 415.
 - 93 Bismarck to AA, Rome, April 29th, 1941-83/61618-20.
- 94 Meldung für den Führer, Vienna, April 21st, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 377.
 - 95 Notiz für den Führer, Vienna, April 27th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 415.
 - 96 Ribbentrop to Keitl, Vienna, April 28th, 1941—792/272972-4.
 - 97 Keitl to Ribbentrop, Führer headquarters, May 3rd, 1941—83/61165.
 - 98 K. von Tippelskirch, Geschichte des zweiten Weltkrieges, Bonn, 1951, p. 153.
- ⁹⁹ Ettel's despatch, Tehran, April 15th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 350, pp. 558-60.
 - 100 K. S. Twitchell, Saudi Arabia, Princeton, 1953, p. 105.
 - ¹⁰¹ See Kroll's despatch, Ankara, May 6th, 1941—83/61677-8.
- ¹⁰² The Italian envoy's report, Baghdad, April 23rd, 1941, transmitted in Mackensen's despatch, Rome, April 25th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 401; es-Sabbagh, op. cit., pp. 230-1.
- 103 Khadduri, op. cit., pp. 221-4; see also M. Khadduri, *Independent Iraq*, London, 1951, p. 192.
 - ¹⁰⁴ Longrigg, op. cit., pp. 290-1.
- ¹⁰⁵ A. P. Wavell, Dispatch on Operations in Iraq, East Syria and Iran, from 10th April 1941 to 12th January 1942; Paiforce . . ., p. 42.
 - ¹⁰⁶ Mackensen to AA, Rome, May 3rd, 1941—83/61641-4.
- ¹⁰⁷ Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 26th, 1941—83/61137-8; Ribbentrop to the Rome Embassy, Berlin, April 27th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 413, p. 653.
- ¹⁰⁸ Kroll's despatch on conversation with Iraq's envoy in Turkey, Ankara, May 6th, 1941—83/61677-8.
 - ¹⁰⁹ Kroll to AA, Ankara, May 2nd, 1941—83/61151.
- 110 Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, 5th Ser., Vol. 371, col. 737. The same information was given by Rashid Ali to Grobba (Gehrcke's despatch, Baghdad, May 12th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 503, pp. 788-9).
 - 111 Woermann's instructions to the Embassy in Ankara, Berlin, May 10th,
- 1941—792/272795-6.

 112 Gehrcke's despatch, Baghdad, May 16th, 1941—83/61255.

¹¹³ Haddad, op. cit., p. 96.

114 Notiz für den Führer, Berlin, May 3rd, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 435, pp. 688-9.

115 Ritter's notes on conversation with General von Waldau (of the Luft-

waffe High Command), Berlin, May 9th, 1941—83/61712-3.

¹¹⁶ Woermann's notes, Berlin, May 3rd, 1941—792/272920. See Haddad, op. cit., p. 115, where fantastic sums are mentioned (200,000 guineas in gold).

¹¹⁷ Gehrcke's despatches of May 10th and 11th—83/61218-9.

¹¹⁸ Rudolf Rahn, Ruheloses Leben, Aufzeichnungen und Erinnerungen, Düsseldorf, 1949, p. 153.

Woermann to Gehrcke, Sonderweg, May 9th, 1941—792/272812.

¹²⁰ Woermann's notes, Berlin, May 3rd, 1941—83/61649.

¹²¹ Langer and Gleason, op. cit., p. 498; Robert Aron, Histoire de Vichy, Paris, 1954, p. 427.

122 According to Abetz's despatch to Ribbentrop, Paris, May 3rd, 1941—

83/61194-8.

¹²³ Ritter to the Paris Embassy, Berlin, May 5th, 1941—792/272898-9.

124 Abetz's despatch on conversation with Darlan and General Vogl, Paris,

May 6th, 1941—792/272863-5.

¹²⁵ Abetz's despatch, Paris, May 24th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 546, pp. 867-70. Text of the Paris protocols is printed in *La Délégation française auprès de la commission allemande d'armistice. Recueil de documents publié par le Gouvernement Français*, Vol. IV, Paris, 1957, pp. 472-4, and in DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 559, pp. 892-900.

¹²⁶ Welck's despatch, Wiesbaden, May 20th, 1941—83/61297.

127 Report of the German mission in Syria from May 9th to July 11th, 1941, drawn up by Rahn for Ribbentrop, Special train Westfalen, July 30th, 1941—DGFP, Ser. D, Vol. XIII, London, 1964, no. 165, pp. 237-65.

¹²⁸ Woermann's notes, Berlin, May 10th, 1941—792/272822.

129 Hentig's notes, Berlin, April 30th, 1941—1391/351268-9; Notiz für den Führer, Berlin, May 3rd, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 435.

130 Notes for Ambassador Ritter, Berlin, May 8th, 1941—792/272825.

Former AA official Lieutenant Schmalz was appointed to help them.

¹³¹ Report..., DGFP, Vol. XIII, p. 239; Rahn's despatch, May 28th, 1941—83/61370-2; Rahn, op. cit., pp. 154-5.

¹³² Report . . ., DGFP, Vol. XIII, p. 240; Laffargue, Général Dentz. Paris—Syrie 1941, Paris, n.d. p. 66 (figures approximate to the above).

¹³³ Report . . ., DGFP, Vol. XIII, p. 245.

134 Rahn's despatch, June 5th, 1941—658/256880. Rahn's data roughly agree with the figures cited by Dentz—Laffargue, op. cit., p. 204.

135 Laffargue, op. cit., p. 66 n. 1; Geo London, L'Amiral Estéva et le

général Dentz devant la Haute Court de Justice, Lyons, 1945, p. 213.

136 The Italian Baghdad envoy's report of May 28th, 1941, in Bismarck's despatch, Rome, May 31st, 1941—83/61900-2.

¹³⁷ Kramarz's notes, Berlin, May 16th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 528.

¹³⁸ Rahn, op. cit., pp. 161-2.

139 Gehrcke's despatch, Baghdad, May 18th, 1941—83/61277.

¹⁴⁰ Gehrcke's despatch, Baghdad, May 11th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 494, pp. 775-6; Melchers's notes for Woermann, Berlin, May 24th, 1941—699/260745-6.

¹⁴¹ Gehrcke's despatch, Baghdad, May 21st, 1941—83/61295-6.

142 Kramarz's despatch to the Legation in Athens, Berlin, May 28th, 1941—699/260690; Woermann's notes, Berlin, May 24th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 549, p. 872; Altenburg's despatch, Athens, June 6th, 1941—794/273281.

- ¹⁴³ Woermann's notes on conversation with Zamboni, Berlin, May 15th, 1941—83/61764; Woermann's notes, Berlin, May 24th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 549.
 - ¹⁴⁴ Gehrcke's despatch, Baghdad, May 21st, 1941—83/61295-6.
- ¹⁴⁵ Draft protocol of Handelspolitischer Ausschuss meeting, Berlin, May 29th, 1941—4741H/E233241.
 - ¹⁴⁶ According to Brinckmann's notes, Berlin, May 21st, 1941—83/61301-4.
- 147 Text of directive no. 30 is printed in: W. Hubatsch, Hitler's Weisungen für die Kriegsführung 1939–1945, Frankfurt a/M, 1962, pp. 120–2; English translation in: DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 543, pp. 862–4, and Playfair, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 333–4.
- ¹⁴⁸ Ritter to Rahn, Fuschl, May 29th, 1941—83/618886; Report . . ., DGFP, Vol. XIII, p. 249.

¹⁴⁹ Somerset de Chair, The Golden Carpet, London, 1944, p. 21.

150 Kramarz's notes, Berlin, May 16th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 528.

¹⁵¹ Playfair, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 186.

- ¹⁵² Ettel's despatches, Tehran, May 5th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 457, pp. 716-7, and 83/61663.
- 153 'Joseph for Stephen', Baghdad, May 6th, 1941—792/272880. That was apparently Abwehr intelligence.
- ¹ Letter of J. B. Glubb to Somerset de Chair—de Chair, op. cit., p. 212; J. B. Glubb, *The Story of the Arab Legion*, London, 1948, pp. 256–7.

¹⁵⁵ Haddad, op. cit., p. 124.

156 Gehrcke's despatch, Baghdad, May 22nd, 1941—83/61821.

¹⁵⁷ Rahn to Gehrcke, May 24th, 1941—83/61846.

¹⁵⁸ Ettel's despatch, Tehran, May 26th, 1941-83/61345-6.

159 The Italian Baghdad envoy's report of May 24th, 1941, transmitted in Bismarck despatch, Rome, May 27th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 557, pp. 890–1.

Ettel's despatch, Tehran, May 29th, 1941—699/260685.
 Ettel's despatch, Tehran, May 30th, 1941—83/61400.

¹⁶² Haddad, op. cit., p. 126.

¹⁶³ Unsigned notes on conversation between Colonel Junck and General Jeschonnek on May 29th, 1941—83/61887–8.

¹⁶⁴ Despatch of May 19th, 1941—699/260800.

165 Deutsche Informationsstelle III to Weizsäcker, Berlin, May 27th, 1941—83/61865-6.

¹⁶⁶ Gehrcke's despatch, May 30th, 1941—83/61388.

- ¹⁶⁷ See Gehrcke's despatch of May 23rd, 1941, and the reports of Deutsche Informationsstelle III of May 22nd, 26th and 28th, 1941—83/61825–6; 83/61865–6, 83/61918–9.
- 168 P. Leverkühn, Der geheime Nachrichtendienst der deutschen Wehrmacht im Kriege, Frankfurt a/M, 1957, p. 161.

¹⁶⁹ Es-Sabbagh, op. cit., pp. 255-6.

¹⁷⁰ Haddad, op. cit., pp. 110-26.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 114.

- ¹⁷² Gehrcke's despatches of May 27th and 28th, 1941—83/61350, 83/61362.
- ¹⁷³ Gehrcke's despatch of May 30th, 1941—83/61388; Gehrcke's despatch of May 29th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 568, p. 917.

¹⁷⁴ Gehrcke's despatch of May 19th, 1941—83/61280; de Chair, op. cit.,

p. 123; Haddad, op. cit., p. 114.

¹⁷⁵ Ettel's despatch, Tehran, May 25th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 552, pp. 877-8.

¹⁷⁶ Ribbentrop to Papen, Fuschl, May 17th, 1941—Germanskaya politika v Turcii (1941–1943 gg). Moscow, 1946, pp. 11–14.

- 177 Ribbentrop to Papen, Fuschl, May 19th, 1941—ibid., pp. 15-7.
- 178 Ritter to the Embassy in Ankara, Fuschl, May 22nd, 1941—83/61822.
- ¹⁷⁹ Eisenlohr to the Embassy in Ankara, May 22nd, 1941—83/61317–19.
- ¹⁸⁰ Kroll to AA, Ankara, May 5th, 1941—792/272884.
- ¹⁸¹ Papen to Ribbentrop, Ankara, May 14th, 1941—Germanskaya politika... op. cit., pp. 7-8.
 - ¹⁸² Report . . ., DGFP, Vol. XIII, pp. 258-9.
- ¹⁸³ Géhrcke's despatches of May 29th and 30th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 568, 83/61395, 83/61401.
 - ¹⁸⁴ Gehrcke's despatch of May 30th, 1941—83/61388.
 - ¹⁸⁵ Ettel to AA, Tehran, June 9th, 1941—83/61930-1.
 - ¹⁸⁸ Ribbentrop's despatch, May 31st, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 576, p. 932.
 - ¹⁸⁷ Gehrcke's despatch, Tel-Kotchek, May 31st, 1941—83/61423.
 - 188 Ribbentrop's despatch, Fuschl, May 31st, 1941—83/61424.
 - ¹⁸⁹ Playfair, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 194.

IX. GERMANY AND THE SYRIAN CAMPAIGN

- ¹ Kramarz to Rahn, Berlin, June 4th (?), 1941—658/256879.
- ² Otto Abetz, Das offene Problem, Cologne, 1951, p. 190.
- ³ J.-L. Aujol, Le Procés Benoist-Méchin, Paris, 1948, pp. 200-1.
- ⁴ Record of the conversation between Hitler and Darlan at the Berghof on May 11th, 1941—DGFP, Ser. D, Vol. XII, London, 1962, no. 491, p. 765; O. Abetz, *D'une prison*, Paris, 1949, pp. 130-1.
- ⁵ Abetz to Ribbentrop, Paris, June 11th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 616, pp. 1008-11.
- ⁶ Notes on conversation between Ribbentrop, Abetz and Hemmen at Fuschl on June 1st, 1941—O. Abetz, *Das offene Problem*, pp. 190–1.
- ⁷ I. S. O. Playfair, *The Mediterranean and the Middle East*, Vol. II, London, 1956, p. 205; see Dentz's speech of June 6th, 1941.
- ⁸ Keitel to Rahn for General Felmy, Fuschl, May 31st, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 577, p. 933.
 - ⁹ Ribbentrop to Rahn, Fuschl, May 31st, 1941—83/61427.
- ¹⁰ Rahn's report entitled Report on the German Mission in Syria from May 9th to July 11th, 1941, Westfalen, July, 1941—DGFP, Ser. D, Vol. XIII, London, 1964, no. 165, p. 237.
- ¹¹ Woermann's notes on conversation with Colonel Lahousen, Berlin, June 5th, 1941—794/273296-8.
- ¹² Field-Marshal Lord Wilson of Libya, *Eight Years Overseas 1939–1947*, London, 1950, p. 110. Van Engert's reports are printed in FRUS, 1941, Vol. III, Washington, 1959. Their substance was communicated to the British.
- ¹³ Ritter's notes, Salzburg, June 8th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 606, pp. 983-4
- ¹⁴ Report . . ., DGFP, Vol. XIII, p. 254; Rahn's despatches of June 8th, 1941—658/256853-4.
 - ¹⁵ Ritter's notes, Salzburg, June 8th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 606.
 - 16 Ibid.
 - ¹⁷ Papen's despatch, Ankara, June 2nd, 1941—794/273320.
 - ¹⁸ Abetz's despatch, Paris, June 16th, 1941—658/256776-7.
- ¹⁹ Notes on conversation between General Warlimont and Ritter, Berlin, June 22nd, 1941—658/256758.
- ²⁰ Morris to Secretary of State, Berlin, June 4th, 1941—FRUS, 1941, Vol. III, pp. 717–18.
 - 21 G. London, L'Amiral Estéva et le général Dentz devant la Haute Cour de

Justice, Lyon, 1945, pp. 217-18, 220 and 227; Morris to Secretary of State, Berlin, June 16th, 1941—FRUS, op. cit., p. 741.

²² Van Engert to Secretary of State, Beirut, June 14th, 1941—FRUS, op. cit.,

p. 740.

²³ Abetz to Ribbentrop, Paris, June 11th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 616.

²⁴ Grote's notes, Berlin, June 10th, 1941—658/256831-2.

²⁵ Abetz to Ribbentrop, Paris, June 11th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 616.

²⁶ Grote's notes, Berlin, June 11th, 1941—658/256829.

²⁷ Abetz to Ribbentrop, Paris, June 11th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 616; London, op. cit., p. 219; Morris to Secretary of State, Berlin, June 16th, 1941—FRUS, op. cit., p. 741.

²⁸ Rahn's despatch of June 15th, 1941—658/256790-1.

²⁹ Welck's despatch, Wiesbaden, June 21st, 1941—658/256745-6; Rittmeister's despatch, Koko (Kontrolkommission Wiesbaden?), June 22nd, 1941—658/256737-8.

³⁰ Ritter's despatch, Fuschl, June 9th, 1941—658/256842.

31 Abetz's despatch, Paris, June 25th, 1941—658/256711; see O. Abetz, Das

offene Problem, p. 195.

- ³² Laffargue, Général Dentz, Paris-Syrie 1941, Paris, n.d., p. 118; Leahy to Secretary of State, Vichy, June 12th and 16th, 1941—FRUS, op. cit., pp. 737 and 740.
- ³³ General Doyen to General Koeltz, July 7th, 1941, and Dentz's despatch—DFCAA, Vol. IV, pp. 540-1; Laffargue, op. cit., p. 119; London, op. cit., p. 217.

³⁴ W. L. Langer and S. E. Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, New York, 1953, p. 145.

35 Cordell Hull to Admiral Leahy, Washington, June 10th, 1941-FRUS,

op. cit., p. 735.

- ³⁶ Grote's notes, Berlin, June 11th, 1941—658/256829; Leahy to Secretary of State, Vichy, June 12th, 16th and 27th, 1941—FRUS, op. cit., pp. 737, 740, 750–1.
 - ³⁷ Welck's despatch, Wiesbaden, June 16th, 1941—658/256774–5.

38 Ibid.

³⁹ London, op. cit., p. 218.

- ⁴⁰ Laffargue, op. cit., pp. 116–35; Rahn's despatches of June 8th, 1941—658/256855 and 658/256861; London, op. cit., pp. 291–21.
- ⁴¹ Laffargue, loc. cit.; *Report* . . ., DGFP, Vol. XIII, pp. 247-8; London, op. cit., p. 219.
- ⁴² Rahn's despatch, June 19th, 1941—658/256763; Prince Xavier de Bourbon, Les Accords secrets franco-anglais, Paris, 1949, pp. 99.

43 Laffargue, op. cit., pp. 137 ff.

44 Ibid. p. 136.

⁴⁵ General Huntziger to the French delegation at the German Armistice Commission, July 1st, 1941; the delegation's answer, July 2nd, 1941; Admiral Michelier's note to General Vogl, July 2nd, 1941—DFCAA, Vol. IV, pp. 545–6.

46 Note of July 4th, 1941—ibid.

⁴⁷ London, op. cit., pp. 229 and 261.

48 Abetz's despatch, Paris, June 16th, 1941-658/256776-7.

⁴⁹ Abetz to Ribbentrop, Paris, June 11th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 616. See W. S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. III, London, 1950, p. 295.

⁵⁰ Rahn's despatch, May 17th, 1941—658/256962.

- ⁵¹ Rahn's despatches of June 5th and 6th, 1941—658/256875 and 658/256873.
- ⁵² Report . . ., DGFP, Vol. XIII, p. 247; Rahn's despatch of May 19th, 1941—658/256957.

⁵³ Ribbentrop to Papen, Fuschl, June 7th, 1941—658/256872; Ribbentrop to Rahn, Fuschl, June 8th, 1941—658/256857.

⁵⁴ Playfair, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 203-4.

⁵⁵ Papen's despatch, Ankara, June 9th, 1941—658/256841.

⁵⁶ Rahn's despatch of June 21st, 1941—658/256749.

⁵⁷ Ritter's despatch, Salzburg, June 11th, 1941—658/256827-8; Laffargue, op. cit., p. 139.

⁵⁸ Papen's despatch, Ankara, June 12th, 1941—658/256809.

- ⁵⁹ Leahy to the Secretary of State, Vichy, June 22nd, 1941—FRUS, op. cit., pp. 747-8.
- ⁶⁰ Rahn's despatch of June 19th, 1941—658/256762; Schwarzmann's notes, Berlin, June 19th, 1941—658/256761.

⁶¹ Playfair, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 214.

- ⁶² Ritter's despatch, Salzburg, June 11th, 1941—658/256827-8; Welck's despatch, Wiesbaden, June 13th, 1941—658/256807; Kramarz's notes, Berlin, June 14th, 1941—658/256794.
 - 63 Welck's despatch, Wiesbaden, June 24th, 1941—658/256727.

64 Schleier's despatch, Paris, June 24th, 1941—658/256727.

65 Admiral Michelier's report of June 24th, 1941—DFCAA, Vol. IV, pp. 536-7.

66 Dentz to Huntziger, July 4th, 1941—ibid., p. 539.

67 Schleier's despatch, Paris, June 25th, 1941—658/256712-13; text of French note on flights through Turkey—3864H/E045302-3.

68 Rittmeister's despatch, Koko, June 22nd, 1941—658/256737-8.

⁶⁹ W. Hubatsch, Hitlers Weisungen für die Kriegsführung 1939–1945, Frankfurt a/M, 1962, pp. 120-2.

⁷⁰ Report of an intelligence agent from Ankara of June 25th, 1941, transmitted to Weizsäcker by Deutsche Informationsstelle III, Berlin, July 6th, 1941—70/50547-9; see also Gehrcke's despatch of May 23rd, 1941—83/61315.

⁷¹ Aujol, op. cit., p. 240; Kramarz to the Embassy in Ankara, Berlin, June 25th, 1941—3864H/E045313.

⁷² Admiral Michelier's despatch of June 24th, 1941—DFCAA, Vol. IV, pp. 536-7.

78 Papen's despatch, Ankara, June 27th, 1941—3864H/E045299-300.

⁷⁴ Papen's despatch, Ankara, July 1st, 1941—3864H/E045292.

75 Papen's despatch, Ankara, June 27th, 1941—3864H/E045299-300.

⁷⁶ Laffargue, op. cit., p. 161.

⁷⁷ Van Engert's conversations with Shukri el-Quwatli and Fakhri el-Barudi are reported in his despatches from Beirut of April 9th and May 4th, 1941—FRUS, op. cit., pp. 695-7 and 700-1.

⁷⁸ Rahn's despatch of June 2nd, 1941—658/256884–5.

⁷⁹ Woermann's notes on conversation with Colonel Lahousen, Berlin, June 5th, 1941—794/273296–8.

⁸⁰ Ritter's notes on conversation with General Jodl, Salzburg, June 9th, 1941 —794/273282–3.

81 Rahn's despatch of June 10th, 1941—658/256835-6.

82 Rahn's despatch of June 4th, 1941-658/256867-70.

83 Rahn's despatch of June 10th, 1941—658/256835-6.

84 Möllhausen's despatch of June 25th, 1941—658/256716; Report . . ., DGFP, Vol. XIII, p. 261.

85 Report . . ., ibid., p. 263; R. Rahn, Ruheloses Leben, Düsseldorf, 1949, pp. 171-2.

86 Playfair, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 217-19.

87 Ettel to AA, Tehran, July 5th, 1941—71/50881.

88 Report . . ., DGFP, Vol. XIII, pp. 250-1.

89 Emir Adel Arslan's memorandum, Istanbul, July 25th, 1941—3864H/E045273-8.

⁹⁰ Report . . ., DGFP, Vol. XIII, p. 251.

⁹¹ Eden's speech at Mansion House of May 29th, 1941—The Times, May 30th, 1941; General Catroux's Proclamation of June 8th, 1941—G. Catroux, Dans la bataille de la Méditerranée, Paris, 1949, pp. 137–8; see also Documents on International Affairs 1939–1946, Vol. II, London, 1954, pp. 172–3.

⁹² Abetz's despatch, Paris, June 21st, 1941—658/256744.

93 See, for instance, General Doyen's memorandum of July 16th, 1941—DFCAA, Vol. IV, pp. 645-60.

⁹⁴ Wilson, op. cit., p. 113.

95 General Huntziger to General Doyen, June 16th, 1941—DFCAA, Vol. IV, p. 520.

⁹⁶ Rahn's despatch of June 11th, 1941—658/256826.

⁹⁷ Playfair, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 204.

98 Cordell Hull to Van Engert, Washington, June 19th, 1941—FRUS, op. cit., pp. 745-6.

⁹⁹ London, op. cit., p. 222; Van Engert to the Secretary of State, Beirut, June

21st, 1941—FRÛS, op. cit., p. 747; Laffargue, op. cit., pp. 142-3, n. 2.

100 Van Engert to the Secretary of State, Beirut, June 25th, 1941—FRUS, op. cit., p. 750.

101 Text of Dentz's letter is printed in Laffargue, op. cit., pp. 154-5; see Lon-

don, op. cit., p. 223.

102 London, op. cit., pp. 232-4; Leahy to the Secretary of State, Vichy, June 30th, 1941—FRUS, op. cit., pp. 755-6.

¹⁰³ London, op. cit., p. 224.

104 Sumner Welles to Admiral Leahy, Washington, July 7th, 1941—FRUS,

op. cit., p. 762.

105 On the British proposals for a cease-fire see G. Kirk, *The Middle East in the War*, London, 1954, pp. 101–2; Vichy's reply in *New York Times*, July 12th, 1941; *Oriente Moderno*, July, 1941, and FRUS, op. cit., pp. 771–2.

¹⁰⁶ Text of cease-fire agreement in French—DFCAA, Vol. IV, pp. 627-30; in English, Playfair, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 335-6; In German, Achenbach's despatch,

Paris, July 15th, 1941-70/50612.

¹⁰⁷ Ribbentrop to Woermann, Special train *Westfalen*, July 11th, 1941—70/50567. See also Woermann to the Embassies in Italy and in Paris, Berlin, July 12th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XIII, no. 101, pp. 128–9.

108 Draft despatch of Weizsäcker to Rahn, Berlin, July 11th (?), 1941—

70/50570.

¹⁰⁹ Papen's despatch on conversation with Saracoğlu, Ankara, July 9th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XIII, no. 86, p. 106.

110 Ribbentrop to the Embassy in Ankara, Special train, July 12th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XIII, no. 97, p. 123.

¹¹¹ Wilson, op. cit., p. 121; Laffargue, op. cit., p. 182; Playfair, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 222.

X. SPREAD OF THE WAR AND NAZI ARAB POLICY

¹ I. S. O. Playfair, *The Mediterranean and the Middle East*, Vol. II, London, 1956, pp. 299-300.

² J. R. M. Butler, Grand Strategy, Vol. II, London, 1957, p. 533; Playfair,

op. cit., Ch. III.

³ Halder, Kriegstagebuch, Vol. II, Stuttgart, 1963, p. 343 (note of April 3rd, 1941).

- ⁴ G. Kirk, The Middle East in the War, London, 1954, pp. 257 and 491.
- ⁵ W. S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. III, London, 1950, pp. 362-4.
- ⁶ Hitler to Mussolini, June 21st, 1941—DGFP, Ser. D, Vol. XII, London, 1962, no. 660, pp. 1066–9; notes on the Hitler-Mussolini meeting of August 25th, 1941—Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, London, 1948, p. 451.
 - ⁷ Hitler's conversation with Ciano on October 25th, 1941—ibid., p. 458.

8 Churchill, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 359.

- ⁹ Halder, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 292 (note of February 25th, 1941); see also ibid., p. 315 (notes of March 16th, 1941, for a report to Hitler) and p. 444 (note of June 4th, 1941).
- ¹⁰ W. Hubatsch, *Hitlers Weisungen für die Kriegsführung 1939-1945*, Frankfurt a/M, 1962, pp. 129-34.

¹¹ 074–C, IMT, Vol. XXXIV.

¹² See, for instance, 057-C, IMT, Vol. XXXIV.

¹³ Churchill, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 490.

¹⁴ 057-C, IMT, Vol. XXXIV.

¹⁵ W. Hubatsch, op. cit., pp. 134-6.

- ¹⁶ Playfair, op. cit., p. 248; see also Churchill, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 760-2.
- ¹⁷ I. S. O. Playfair, *The Mediterranean and the Middle East*, Vol. III, London, 1960, p. 127.
- ¹⁸ Memorandum of the High Command of the Wehrmacht of August 27th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XIII, no. 265, pp. 422–33; see also Playfair, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 261.
 - ¹⁹ Directive no. 38 is printed in Hubatsch, op. cit., pp. 169-70.
 - ²⁰ Grobba's notes, Berlin, May 30th, 1942—1475/368090.
- ²¹ Appendix to memorandum on the Middle East, Berlin, November 6th, 1941—71/50932-3.
- ²² According to the Mufti's notes on conversation with Hitler (in Arabic)—photostatic copy in *The Arab Higher Committee*, New York, 1947; see also Schmidt's record of this conversation in DGFP, Vol. XIII, no. 551, pp. 881-5.

²³ Playfair, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 260–1.

²⁴ Grobba's notes, Berlin, February 7th, 1942—1475/368139-40; Grobba's notes, Berlin, May 30th, 1942—1475/368090-3.

²⁵ Woermann's notes, Berlin, March 12th, 1942-71/51056-61.

- ²⁶ Appendix to Woermann's notes of March 12th, 1942, Berlin, March 10th, 1942—71/51062-71.
- ²⁷ W. S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. IV, London, 1951, pp. 161-2.
- ²⁸ K. von Tippelskirch, Geschichte des zweiten Weltkrieges, Bonn, 1951, p. 262.
- ²⁹ Survey of International Affairs 1939-46, The Far East 1942-1946, London, 1955, p. 98.

³⁰ Îbid., p. 100.

³¹ See Grobba's notes, Berlin, February 7th, 1942—1475/368139-40.

³² See collection StS. Afrika—540-541/240511-241150.

³³ Weizsäcker to the Tehran Legation, Berlin, June 1st, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 590, pp. 959-60.

³⁴ Woermann's notes, Berlin, June 13th, 1941—794/273278.

- 35 Izzet (Derwaza?) and Ishaq (Derwish?) to the Mufti—Rahn's despatch of June 24th, 1941—658/256724.
- ³⁶ Ettel's despatch, Tehran, July 7th, 1941—83/61941-2. See also Ettel's despatch, Tehran, August 21st, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XIII, no. 221, pp. 344-5.

³⁷ Weizsäcker's notes, Berlin, June (?) (day not indicated), 1941—794/273294-5.

- ³⁸ See *The Times*, September 12th, 1941; M. Pearlman, *Mufti of Jerusalem*, London, 1947, pp. 40-41.
- ⁸⁹ Ettel's despatches, Tehran, July 15th and 17th, 1941—83/61943 and 83/61446.

40 Woermann to Rintelen, Berlin, July 19th, 1941-83/61448.

⁴¹ Papen's despatches, Tarabya, August 1st and 30th, 1941—83/61948 and 83/61952.

⁴² Papen to AA, Tarabya, August 30th, 1941—83/61951.

43 Despatch from Ankara, November 17th, 1941-83/61953.

44 Killinger's despatch, Bucharest, November 21st, 1941-83/61957.

⁴⁵ Moyzisch and Chapeaurouge to the Reich Main Security Office (RSHA), Istanbul, November 21st, 1941—83/61955.

⁴⁶ Despatch of Leverkühn and Moyzisch, Istanbul, November 21st, 1941—83/61958.

⁴⁷ See G. Kirk, op. cit., p. 158.

- ⁴⁸ Salah ed-Din es-Sabbagh, Fursan al-'uruba fi al-'Iraq, Damascus, 1956, p. 262.
 - ⁴⁹ M. Khadduri, *Independent Iraq*, London, 1960, pp. 236-8.

⁵⁰ Kroll to AA, Tarabya, September 9th, 1941—794/273211.

⁵¹ Bismarck to AA, Rome, October 28th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XIII, no. 428, pp. 704-5.

XI. NEW DECLARATIONS ON ARAB QUESTIONS

- ¹ Fawzi el-Qawuqji to the OKW, Berlin, July 27th, 1941—794/273247-51.
- ² Kirk to the Secretary of State, Cairo, May 23rd and 29th, 1941—FRUS, 1941, Vol. III, Washington, 1959, pp. 609–10 and 274–5; Freya Stark, *East Is West*, London, 1945, p. 61.

³ Grobba's notes, Berlin, August 7th, 1941—794/273223-30; unsigned notes

(Woermann's?), Berlin, August 13th, 1941—794/273221-2.

- ⁴ Weizsäcker to the Reich Foreign Minister's Bureau, Berlin, August 25th, 1941—71/50866.
- ⁵ Ribbentrop's despatch, Special train Westfalen, July 20th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XIII, no. 132, pp. 188-9.
 - ⁶ Unsigned notes (Woermann's?), Berlin, August 13th, 1941—794/273221-2.
- ⁷ Italian and French draft—71/50906-7. English translation in DGFP, Vol. XIII, no. 449, pp. 742-3.
- ⁸ Grobba's notes, Berlin, November 6th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XIII, no. 452, pp. 746-8.

9 Ibid.

- ¹⁰ Ibid.; Mackensen's despatch, Rome, November 14th, 1941—71/50936-9.
- ¹¹ Woermann's notes, Berlin, November 6th, 1941—71/50909–16; appendix to Woermann's notes—71/50917–33.
 - ¹² Robert Aron, *Histoire de Vichy*, Paris, 1954, pp. 460-1.
 - ¹³ K. Assmann, Deutsche Schicksalsjahre, Wiesbaden, 1950, p. 303.
- ¹⁴ Abetz's despatch, Paris, November 23rd, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XIII, no. 494, pp. 815-6.
- ¹⁵ Woermann's notes for Ribbentrop, Berlin, November 26th, 1941—71/50962-5.
- ¹⁸ Survey of International Affairs 1939-1946, Hitler's Europe, London, 1954, p. 394; R. Aron, op. cit., Pt. III, Ch. VI.
 - ¹⁷ Papen's despatch, Ankara, November 13th, 1941—71/50940.
 - ¹⁸ Woermann's notes, Berlin, November 6th, 1941—71/50909-16.
 - ¹⁹ Woermann to Rintelen, Berlin, November 19th, 1941-71/50949-50.

- ²⁰ Mackensen's despatch, Rome, November 14th, 1941—71/50936-9.
- ²¹ Despatch from Rome, November 22nd, 1941—71/50958.
- ²² Photostatic copy of the Mufti's notes in Arabic on conversation with Hitler—*The Arab Higher Committee*, New York, 1947. Von Lösch's record on the Mufti's conversation with Ribbentrop and Schmidt's record on the Mufti's conversation with Hitler are to be found in DGFP, Vol. XIII, nos. 514 and 515, pp. 876–85.
- ²³ Woermann's notes, Berlin, November 26th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XIII, no. 516, p. 885.
- ²⁴ Lösch's notes on conversation between Ribbentrop and Bose of November 29th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XIII, no. 521, pp. 896–900.
- ²⁵ Woermann to the Embassy in Tokyo, Berlin, December 8th, 1941; Mackensen to AA, Rome, December 22nd, 1941—DZA Potsdam, AA 48065.
- ²⁶ Grobba referred to this precedent in his notes of January 26th, 1942—71/50999-51002.
 - ²⁷ M. Khadduri, *Independent Iraq*, London, 1960, p. 236.
- ²⁸ Grobba's notes, Berlin, December 2nd, 1941—71/50971; text of the draft treaty—71/50972-6.
 - ²⁹ Woermann's notes, Berlin, December 19th, 1941—83/61970.
 - ³⁰ Woermann's notes, Berlin, December 22nd, 1941—83/61975.
- ³¹ Ribbentrop's letter to 'His Excellency Mr. Prime Minister Rashid Ali el-Kilani', Berlin, December 19th, 1941—71/51239.
- ³² Notes on Weizsäcker's conversation with the Mufti, Berlin, January 27th, 1942—71/51011-14.
 - 33 See Woermann's notes of November 6th, 1941—71/50909-16.
 - 34 Text of the Japanese draft, Berlin, January 10th, 1942-71/50994-8.
- ³⁵ Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 15th and 18th, 1942—71/51096-8 and 71/51108; Weizsäcker's notes, Berlin, April 21st, 1942—71/51109; Ribbentrop to the Tokyo Embassy, Special train, April 22nd, 1942—71/51110; Woermann's notes, May 1st, 1942—71/51123.
 - ³⁶ Grobba's notes, Rome, February 14th, 1942—1475/368139 ff.
 - 37 Ciano's Diary, London, 1947, notes of April 10th and 11th, 1942.
 - 38 The Department of State Bulletin, July 14th, 1946, pp. 61-66.
 - 39 Ciano's Diary, note of May 3rd, 1942.
 - ⁴⁰ Ibid., note of May 5th, 1942.
- ⁴¹ Grobba's despatch, Rome, February 20th, 1942—83/62005; Ciano's Diary, note of February 18th, 1942.
 - ⁴² Grobba's notes, Berlin, April 22nd, 1942—71/51122–14.
 - 43 Despatch from Rome, March 2nd, 1942—83/62005.
 - 44 Abetz's notes, Berlin, February 25th, 1942—71/51046-9.
 - ⁴⁵ Auer's despatch, Casablanca, February 25th, 1942—71/51033-4.
 - 46 Pfeiffer's despatch, Paris, February 28th, 1942-71/51051.
 - ⁴⁷ Despatch from Rome, February 25th, 1942—83/61993-62003.
 - 48 Woermann's notes, Berlin, March 2nd, 1942-83/62006.
 - ⁴⁹ Mackensen's despatches, Rome, March 25th and 31st, 1942—83/62010.
 - ⁵⁰ Text of Rashid Ali's letter to Ciano—71/51247-8.
 - ⁵¹ Despatch from Rome, February 25th, 1942—83/61993-62003.
 - 52 Text of Ciano's letter to Rashid Ali—71/51249-50.
- ⁵⁸ Woermann's notes, Berlin, May 18th, 1942—83/62028. Texts of Rashid Ali's letter to Ribbentrop and Ribbentrop's to Rashid Ali—71/51251-4.
 - ⁵⁴ Mackensen's despatch, Rome, March 25th, 1942—83/62008.
 - 55 Mackensen's despatch, Rome, March 28th, 1942—71/51074-5.
- ⁵⁶ Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 8th and 9th, 1942—71/51088 and 71/51089-90.

⁵⁷ Mackensen's despatch, Rome, April 25th, 1942—71/51117.

⁵⁸ Text of letters from the Mufti and Rashid Ali to Ribbentrop and from Ribbentrop to the Mufti and Rashid Ali—71/51240-3.

⁵⁹ Text of letters from the Mufti and Rashid Ali to Ciano and from Ciano to the Mufti and Rashid Ali—71/51245-6.

XII. THE AXIS EGYPT OFFENSIVE

¹ Ugo Cavellero, Comando Supremo, Bologna, 1948, pp. 176-7.

² Enno von Rintelen, *Mussolini als Bundesgenosse*, Tübingen and Stuttgart, 1951, pp. 160-1; *Ciano's Diary*, London, 1947, note of January 20th, 1942.

³ Ciano's Diary, note of April 22nd, 1942.

⁴ Rintelen, op. cit., pp. 165-6; I. S. O. Playfair, The Mediterranean and the Middle East, Vol. III, London, 1960, p. 219.

⁵ Cavallero, op. cit., pp. 277-8.

⁶ Rintelen, op. cit., p. 172.

⁷ E. Rommel, Krieg ohne Hass, Heidenheim, 1950, p. 387.

- 8 Walter Görlitz, Der Zweite Weltkrieg, 1939-1945, Stuttgart, 1951, Vol. I, p. 358.
 - ⁹ Kordt's despatch, Berne, February 18th, 1941—266/173584-6.

¹⁰ Abetz's despatch, Paris, February 25th, 1941—266/173587-8.

¹¹ Weizsäcker to Ribbentrop, Berlin, March 10th, 1941—266/173589.

¹² Ettel's despatch, Tehran, April 15th, 1941—DGFP, Ser. D, Vol. XII,

London, 1962, no. 350, pp. 558-60.

- ¹³ Papen to AA, Tarabya, October 6th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XIII, no. 385, pp. 618–20; Albrecht to the Embassy in Paris, Berlin, November (?) (no day indicated), 1941—266/173648–9; Abetz's despatch, Paris, December 4th, 1941—266/173594–6.
- ¹⁴ Ribbentrop to the Tehran Legation, Vienna, April 30th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 427, pp. 680-1.

¹⁵ Ettel's despatch, Tehran, May 4th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 448, p. 701.

- ¹⁶ See, for instance, the report of *Deutsche Informationsstelle III* for Weizsäcker, Berlin, September 2nd, 1941—266/173628-30; Melchers's notes, Berlin, April 16th, 1942—266/173693-4.
- ¹⁷ See Oriente Moderno, 1942 and 1943; G. Kirk, The Middle East in the War, London, 1954, p. 211.

¹⁸ Melchers's notes, Berlin, April 16th, 1941—266/173600-1.

- ¹⁹ See Prüfer's memorandum no. 14, Berlin, June 17th. 1943—K879/K221519–25.
- ²⁰ See, for instance, Abbas Hilmi's letter to Prüfer, Geneva, June 28th, 1943—K880/K221547.

²¹ Kirk, op. cit., p. 211.

- ²² Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 15th, 1941—226/173598-9.
- 23 Woermann to the Paris Embassy, Berlin, June 26th, 1941—266/173621.
- ²⁴ Woermann's notes, Berlin, May 5th, 1941—266/173616-17; Woermann to the Paris Embassy, Berlin, June 26th, 1941—226/173621.
 - ²⁵ Woermann's notes, Berlin, September 18th and 27th, 1941—266/173636-40.
 - ²⁶ Woermann's notes, Berlin, March 28th, 1942—266/173687-9.
 - ²⁷ Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 1st, 1942—266/173690-1.
- ²⁸ Mackensen's despatch, Rome, March 30th, 1942—71/51077-8; Woermann's notes, Berlin, April 1st, 1942—266/173690-1.
- ²⁹ See Woermann's despatch to the Paris Embassy, Berlin, June 26th 1941—266/173621.

³⁰ A different description of these events was given in the Turkish envoy's despatch of February 3rd. 1942—see below.

³¹ Oriente Moderno, March 1942, p. 85; FRUS, 1941, Vol. III, Washington,

1959, pp. 281 ff.

- ³² Kirk to the Secretary of State, Cairo, July 2nd, 1941—ibid., pp. 282-3.
 - 33 Woermann's notes, Berlin, February 17th, 1942-266/173681-2.

³⁴ Frankfurter Zeitung, February 6th, 1942.

- 35 Mackensen's despatch, Rome, February 12th, 1942-266/173664.
- ³⁶ Mackensen's despatch, Rome, February 15th, 1942—266/173669-77.

³⁷ Melchers's notes, Berlin, April 16th, 1942—266/173693-4.

- 38 Weizsäcker's despatch, Berlin, June 26th, 1942-266/173702-4.
- ³⁹ Schmieden's despatch, Special train, May 29th, 1942—266/173698-9.
- 40 Weizsäcker's despatch, Berlin, June 26th, 1942—266/173702-4.

41 Hitler's Table Talk, London, 1953, p. 550.

⁴² Mackensen's despatch, Rome, July 1st, 1942—266/173707-8.

43 Giornale d'Italia, July 2nd, 3rd, and 4th, 1942.

44 Mackensen to Rintelen, Rome, July 2nd, 1942—266/173711-12.

⁴⁵ Draft declaration—ibid. Text of the declaration—71/51255.

⁴⁶ See collection Ettel, Handakten, König Faruk—Ser. no. 1466; see also The Record of Collaboration of King Farouk of Egypt with the Nazis and Their Ally, the Mufti, New York, 1948.

⁴⁷ Ettel's despatch, Berlin, June 24th, 1942—1446/364896–9.

48 Ettel's notes, Istanbul, July 2nd, 1942—1446/364864-5; Ettel to Ribben-

trop, Istanbul, July 24th, 1942—1446/364829-33.

Woermann's notes, Berlin, July 28th, 1942—1446/364848; Tismer's notes, Berlin, July 31st, 1942—1446/364844; see also Abd el-Latif Boghdadi's article in *Hadihi ath-thawra*, Cairo, 1953, pp. 188-9, and Eliezer Beeri, *On the History of the Free Officers in Egypt—Ha-mizrah he-hadash*, Vol. XIII, pp. 250-1.

⁵⁰ Tismer's notes, Berlin, July 21st, 1942—1446/364859.

- ⁵¹ Tismer's notes, Berlin, July 28th and 31st, 1942—1446/364858 and 1446/364854-7.
 - ⁵² Tismer's notes, Berlin, July 31st, 1942—1446/364854-7.
 - 53 Anwar El Sadat, Revolt on the Nile, London, 1957, p. 34.
 - ⁵⁴ Tismer's notes, Berlin, July 31st, 1942—1446/364854-7.
 - ⁵⁵ Ettel's notes, Istanbul, July 24th, 1942—1446/364864-5.
- ⁵⁶ Ettel to Hezinger, Istanbul, July 24th, 1942—1446/364860–2; Ettel to Senfft, Berlin, August 13th, 1942—1446/364805; Ettel to the Mufti, Berlin, August 13th, 1942—1446/364802–3.
 - ⁵⁷ Mackensen to Rintelen, Rome, July 2nd, 1942—266/173713-14.

58 Ciano's Diary, notes of July 2nd and 3rd, 1942.

- ⁵⁹ Mackensen's despatch, Rome, July 4th, 1942—266/173717-19.
- 60 Ribbentrop to the Rome Embassy, Special train, July 6th, 1942-266/

173722; Ciano's Diary, note of July 7th, 1942.

- ⁶¹ Ribbentrop to the Embassies in Rome and Tokyo, Special train, August 16th, 1942—266/173762; Rintelen's despatch, Special train, August 17th, 1942—109/114715–16.
- ⁶² Hitler's Table Talk, p. 573; Ribbentrop's instructions for Neurath, jun., were in the same spirit, see Ribbentrop to Weizsäcker, Special train, August 17th, 1942—266/173763-4.
 - 63 Mackensen to Rintelen, Rome, July 2nd, 1942-266/173713-14.

64 Ibid.

⁶⁵ Woermann's notes, Berlin, July 4th, 1942—266/173715, and notes from the Italian Embassy, Berlin, July 4th, 1942—266/173716.

⁶⁶ Papen's despatch, Tarabya, July 4th, 1942—266/173720; Anwar El Sadat, op. cit., pp. 42-43.

67 Rintelen to Clodius, Special train, July 12th, 1942—266/173733-4.

⁶⁸ Neurath to Ribbentrop, 'Afrika-Korps', July 15th, 1942—109/114674-5; Ciano's Diary, note of July 6th, 1942.

69 Woermann to Ritter, Berlin, July 9th, 1942—266/173729-31.

- Clodius's despatch, Brioni, August 19th, 1942—109/114719.
 Notes of the Italian Embassy, Berlin, August 4th, 1942—345/200174-6
- ⁷² Rintelen to Clodius, Special train, July 12th, 1942—266/173733—4.

⁷³ Mackensen's despatch, Rome, July 15th, 1942—266/173738.

- 74 Notes of Woermann and of the Italian Embassy, Berlin, August 4th, 1942—266/173751-4.
 - 75 Wiehl's notes, Berlin, October 1st, 1942—345/200167-8.

⁷⁶ Wiehl's notes, Berlin, September 5th, 1942—266/173769-70.

- 77 Mackensen's despatch, Rome, August 28th, 1942-345/200169-70.
- 78 Weizsäcker to Clodius, Berlin, September 16th, 1942-266/173772.
- ⁷⁹ Wiehl's notes, Berlin, September 19th, 1942—266/173774.

80 Ibid.

81 Clodius's despatch, Rome, October 17th, 1942—266/173782.

82 Wiehl's notes, Berlin, October 7th, 1942—266/173779.

- 83 Clodius's despatch, Rome, October 17th, 1942—266/173782.
- 84 Wiehl's notes, Berlin, October 2nd, 1942—266/173776-7; Rommel, op. cit., pp. 236-7.

85 Clodius's despatch, Rome, October 20th, 1942—345/200145.

86 Papen's despatch, Tarabya, July 4th, 1942—266/173720.

XIII. THE ARAB LEGION AND MUFTI-KILANI DISPUTE

¹ According to General Felmy's evidence at the so-called Balkan trial—*Prozess VII*, Vol. XXV, pp. 6737-58.

² Sonderstab F (Befeĥshaber), Zusammenfassender Bericht über die Tätigkeit des Sonderstabes F in der arabischen Frage, August 15th, 1942—5237/E311348-54.

³ Granow's despatch, Rome, March 30th, 1942—86/62809–13.

⁴ Granow's and Bismarck's despatch, Rome, March 28th, 1942—86/62808.

⁵ Weizsäcker's notes, Berlin, November 7th, 1941—71/50908; records of the Mufti's conversations with Ribbentrop and Hitler—DGFP, Vol. XIII, nos. 514 and 515, pp. 876–85.

⁶ Weizsäcker's notes, Berlin, December 24th, 1941—71/50987; Woermann's

notes, Berlin, December 26th, 1941—71/50988-9.

- ⁷ Notes on statement by Colonel Rudolf, Abteilung Ausland OKW (Foreign Department of the Wehrmacht High Command), Berlin, January 12th, 1942—71/50992.
 - ⁸ Zusammenfassender Bericht . . . —5237/E311348–54.

⁹ Grobba's notes, Berlin, May 30th, 1942—1475/368091-3.

¹⁰ Woermann's notes, Berlin, December 26th, 1941—71/50988-9.

¹¹Granow's and Bismarck's despatch, Rome, March 28th, 1942—86/62808; Granow's despatch, Rome, March 30th, 1942—86/62809-13.

¹² Granow's despatch, Rome, April 7th, 1942—86/62815–16; Woermann's notes, Berlin, June 8th, 1942—71/51143–5.

¹³ Zusammenfassender Bericht . . . —5237/E311348-54.

¹⁴ General Felmy to Hajj Amin el-Huseini, June 18th, 1942—993/304518-20.

¹⁵ Woermann's notes, Berlin, May 15th, 1942—86/62836.

¹⁶ Grobba's notes, Berlin, May 30th, 1942—1475/368091-3.

- ¹⁷ Granow's despatch, Rome, April 7th, 1942—86/62815-6; Mackensen's despatch, Rome, May 19th, 1942—86/62837-9; Woermann's notes, Berlin, June 8th, 1942—71/51143-5.
 - ¹⁸ Mackensen's despatch, Rome, May 19th, 1942—86/62837-9.
- ¹⁹ Italian Foreign Ministry to the Reich Embassy, Rome, May 12th, 1942—86/62834.
 - ²⁰ Mackensen's despatch, Rome, May 19th, 1942-86/62837-9.
 - ²¹ Zusammenfassender Bericht . . . —5237/E311348-54.
 - ²² Woermann to the Rome Embassy, Berlin, May 15th, 1942—86/62836.
- ²³ According to communication from OKW, Abteilung Ausland/Abwehr, Grobba's notes for Ribbentrop, Berlin, September 18th, 1942—826/280196-7.
 - ²⁴ Grobba's notes, Berlin, May 30th, 1942—1475/368091-3.
 - ²⁵ Prozess VII, Vol. XXV, p. 6752.
 - ²⁶ Unsigned notes, Special train Westfalen, May 31st, 1942-71/51164-76.
- ²⁷ See, for instance, Woermann's notes, Berlin, August 6th, 1942—794/273238-9; Woermann's notes, Berlin, July 14th, 1942—83/61458-60.
 - ²⁸ Woermann's notes, Berlin, July 14th, 1942-83/61458-60.
- ²⁹ See, for instance, Ettel's notes, Berlin, June 12th, 1942—1475/368080; initialled notes for Ribbentrop, Special train *Westfalen*, May 31st, 1942—1475/368086-9.
 - 30 Woermann's notes, Berlin, August 6th, 1942-794/273238-9.
 - 31 Zusammenfassender Bericht . . . —5237/E311348-54.
 - 32 Unsigned notes, Berlin, July 9th, 1942-71/51158-9.
- ³³ Grobba's notes, Berlin, July 17th, 1942—83/61463-6; Woermann's notes, Berlin, July 20th, 1942—83/61461-2.
 - ³⁴ Mackensen's despatch, Rome, May 19th, 1942—86/62837–9.
 - 35 Weizsäcker's notes, Berlin, June 10th, 1942—71/51147-50.
 - ³⁶ Zusammenfassender Bericht . . . —5237/E311348-54.
 - 37 Bismarck's despatch, Rome, August 20th, 1942-83/62042.
 - 38 Bismarck's despatch, Rome, August 22nd, 1942—83/62043.
 - 39 W. Görlitz, Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stuttgart, 1951, Vol. I, p. 358.
- ⁴⁰ Grobba's notes on conversation with General Felmy, Berlin, September 3rd, 1942—5237/E311355-6; *Prozess VII*, Vol. XXV, p. 6752.
 - ⁴¹ See The Arab Higher Committee, New York, 1947.
- ⁴² Hajj Amin el-Huseini's memorandum, Rome, August 29th, 1942—86/62890-1.
- ⁴³ Hajj Amin el-Huseini's memorandum for the Comando Supremo, Rome, August 29th, 1942—993/304529–31.
- 44 Despatch on Canaris's conversation with the Mufti, Rome, September 16th, 1942—86/62894; Ettel's notes, Berlin, October 20th, 1942—993/304532-3; Schnurre's notes, Berlin, December 12th, 1942 (?)—71/51298-9.
 - 45 Ettel's notes, Berlin, October 20th, 1942—993/304532-3.
 - ⁴⁶ Grobba's notes, Berlin, September 8th, 1942—826/280196-7.
 - ⁴⁷ Zusammenfassender Bericht . . . —5237/E311348-54.
- ⁴⁸ German and Arabic text of the agreement—993/304534-5. In the Arabic version one of the articles is missing.
 - ⁴⁹ Woermann's notes, Berlin, July 13th, 1942—71/51164-72.
 - ⁵⁰ Schellenberg's report, Berlin, October 20th, 1942—1475/368056-60.
 - ⁵¹ Woermann's notes, Berlin, July 13th, 1942—71/51164-72.
- ⁵² Dr. Allardt to Grobba, Tarabya, October 15th, 1942—992/304437-9; M. Khadduri, *Independent Iraq*, London, 1960, p. 241.
- ⁵⁸ Mackensen to Weizsäcker on conversation with Ciano, Rome, September 10th, 1940—DGFP, Vol. XI, no. 40, pp. 48-49.
 - ⁵⁴ Ettel's notes, Berlin, June 12th, 1942—1475/368080; Initialled notes

- (Ettel's?) for Ribbentrop, Special train Westfalen, May 31st, 1942—1475/368086-9.
 - ⁵⁵ M. Khadduri, op. cit., p. 239.
 - ⁵⁶ Mackensen's despatch, Rome, August 8th, 1942—71/51190-2.
- ⁵⁷ Grobba's notes entitled Mitteilungen des Grossmufti über die arabische National-Partei, Berlin, November 12th, 1941—992/304317-20.
 - ⁵⁸ Ettel's notes of June 26th and 27th—992/304321-34.
 - ⁵⁹ Weizsäcker's notes, Berlin, June 10th, 1942—71/51147-50.
 - 60 Woermann's notes, July 13th, 1942-71/51164-72.
 - 61 Ettel to Ribbentrop, Berlin, October 17th, 1942—71/51269-77.
 - 62 Woermann's notes, Berlin, September 12th, 1942-71/51212.
 - 63 Weizsäcker's notes, Berlin, October 22nd, 1942-992/304411.
 - 64 Woermann's notes, Berlin, July 13th, 1942-71/51164-72.
 - 65 Ibid.; Schellenberg's report, Berlin, October 20th, 1942—1475/368056-60.
 - 66 Ettel's notes, Berlin, June 27th, 1942—992/304321-3.
- ⁶⁷ Woermann's notes, Berlin, July 13th, 1942—71/51164–72; Mackensen to Weizsäcker, Rome, September 10th, 1940—DGFP, Vol. XI, no. 40.
 - 68 Ettel to Ribbentrop, Berlin, October 17th, 1942-71/51269-77.
- 69 Woermann's notes, July 13th, 1942—71/51164-72; Ettel to Ribbentrop, October 17th, 1942—71/51269-77; *Hitler's Table Talk*, London, 1953, p. 547.
 - ⁷⁰ Schrumpf's notes for Major Seubert of December 1st, 1941—1319/351003.
- ⁷¹ Ettel to AA, Tehran, April 15th, 1941—DGFP, Vol. XII, no. 350, p. 559; Ettel's report entitled Bericht über die Durchführung der Übermittlung der Botschaft des Herrn Reichsaussenministers an S.M. König Faruk von Ägypten, Berlin, July 12th, 1942—1446/364869–77.
 - 72 Hitler's Table Talk, p. 547.
 - 73 Mackensen's despatch, Rome, September 12th, 1942—71/51207.
 - ⁷⁴ Mackensen's despatch, Rome, September 14th, 1942—71/51214-8.
- ⁷⁵ Woermann's notes, Berlin, September 12th, 1942—71/51209–11; Ettel's notes, Berlin, October 14th, 1942—71/51256-9.
 - ⁷⁶ Martin Luther's notes, Berlin, October 14th, 1942—71/51268.
 - ⁷⁷ Ettel's notes, Berlin, October 14th, 1942—71/51256-9.
- ⁷⁸ Text of letters in Arabic—992/304455, 992/304506, 992/304500, 992/304502 and 992/304504.
 - ⁷⁹ Text of the Mufti's letter to Naji Shawkat—992/304454.
- ⁸⁰ Salah ed-Din es-Sabbagh, Fursan al-'uruba fi al-'Iraq, Damascus, 1956, p. 218.
 - 81 Ettel's notes, Berlin, October 14th, 1942—71/51256-9.
 - 82 Despatch from Rome, December 1st, 1942—71/51293—4.
 - 88 Ettel's notes of December 21st, 1942—992/304366-7.
- ⁸⁴ See S. Wiesenthal, Grossmufti—Grossagent der Achse, Salzburg, 1947; M. Pearlman, Mufti of Jerusalem, London, 1947; The Arab Higher Committee, op. cit.
 - 85 Ettel to Ribbentrop, Berlin, October 14th, 1942—71/51269-77.
 - 86 Notes unsigned and undated (December 1942?)—5237/E311365-6.
 - 87 See K879/K221533-42.

XIV. EPILOGUE IN TUNISIA

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- ² W. S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. IV, London, 1951, Ch. XXXV-XXXVIII.
 - ⁸ K. von Tippelskirch, Geschichte des zweiten Weltkrieges, Bonn, 1951, p. 346.

- ⁴ U. Cavallero, Comando Supremo, Bologna, 1948, pp. 371-8.
- ⁵ Tippelskirch, loc. cit.
- ⁶ G. London, L'Amiral Estéva et le général Dentz devant la Haute Cour de Justice, Lyons, 1945, pp. 29-30.
 - ⁷ R. Rahn, Ruheloses Leben, Düsseldorf, 1949, p. 200.
 - ⁸ G. London, op. cit., pp. 136-7.
- ⁹ Rahn's report, Tunis, November 21st, 1942, entitled Aufzeichnung für Herrn General Nehring über die militärisch-politischen Vorgänge in Tunis vom 9. bis 21. November 1942 (Notes for General Nehring on the military-political events in Tunis from November 9th to 21st, 1942)—1304/346372—83.
 - ¹⁰ See Aufzeichnung . . ., ibid. Rahn, op. cit., p. 200.
 - ¹¹ Rahn to AA, November 15th, 1942—1276/343048-50.
 - ¹² Grote's despatch, Berlin, November 14th. 1942—1246/337270.
- ¹³ See Aufzeichnung . . . —1304/346372-83; Rahn to Laval, undated (November 19th, 1942?)—1276/343041; Rahn to Laval, November 20th, 1942—1276/343051; Rahn to AA, November 21st, 1942—1276/343053-4.
- 14 Rahn, op. cit., p. 201; Rahn to AA, November 15th, 1942—1276/343048—50; Rahn to AA, November 21st and 25th, 1942—1276/343056 and 1276/343059—61.
 - ¹⁵ G. London, op. cit., pp. 13-168.
 - ¹⁶ Rahn to Abetz for AA, December 5th, 1942—1276/343097–9.
 - 17 Ibid.
 - ¹⁸ G. London, op. cit., p. 48.
 - ¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 142-3.
 - ²⁰ Ibid., pp. 54 and 147.
 - ²¹ Ibid., pp. 35 and 148.
 - ²² Rahn to AA, November 27th, 1942—1276/343076.
 - ²⁸ Rahn to AA, undated (November 24th or 25th?, 1942)—1276/343057.
 - ²⁴ Rahn to Abetz for AA, December 5th, 1942—1276343097-9.
 - ²⁵ Rahn to AA, December 8th, 1942—1276/343103-4.
 - ²⁶ Rahn to AA, December 9th, 1942—1276/343107-8.
 - ²⁷ Rahn to AA, December 8th, 1942—1276/343103-4.
 - ²⁸ Rahn to AA, December 17th, 1942—1276/343134-6.
- ²⁹ Rahn to Abetz for AA, December 5th, 1942—1276/343097-9; Rahn to AA, December 9th and 13th, 1942—1276/343107-8 and 1276/343121.
- ³⁰ Rahn, op. cit., pp. 208-9; Rahn to AA, December 11th, 13th and 15th, 1942—1276/343112-14, 1276/343121 and 1276/343125-8.
 - 31 Rahn to AA, January 23rd, 1943-1276/343217-24.
 - ³² Rahn to the Paris Embassy, December 3rd, 1942—1276/343094.
 - ³³ Rahn to AA, December 15th, 1942—1276/343125-8.
- ³⁴ Ibid.; Woermann's notes, Berlin, December 18th, 1942—2213/474674-5; Woermann to Rahn, Berlin, December 24th, 1942—1246/337333.
 - 35 Woermann's despatch, Berlin, December 27th, 1942—1246/337339-40.
 - ³⁶ Rahn to AA, December 30th, 1942—1276/343164-7.
 - ³⁷ Rahn to AA, December 15th, 1942-1276/343125-8.
- ³⁸ Rahn to AA, December 11th and 17th, 1942—1276/343134—6 and 1276/343112—4.
 - ³⁹ Du Jonchay to Laval, Tunis, December 30th, 1942—1276/343174.
- ⁴⁰ Rahn to AA, November 25th, 1942—1276/343058; Rahn to the Paris Embassy, December 3rd, 1942—1276/343090-1.
- ⁴¹ Rahn to AA, December 6th, 1942—1276/343100; Befehl für die Bereitstellung von Arbeitskräften zum Aufbau der H.K.L. mit entsprechender Tiefenzone, December 3rd, 1942—1276/343090—1 (Order for provision of man-power to build the main front line with a corresponding depth-zone).

- ⁴² Woermann to Rahn, Berlin, December 8th, 1942—1246/337298; Rahn to AA, December 9th, 1942—1276/343107–8.
 - ⁴³ Rahn to Megerle, April 4th, 1943—1276/343297.
- ⁴⁴ Le Lt-Colonel Aviateur Christian du Jonchay à Monsieur Pierre Laval, Chef du Gouvernement, Tunis, April 9th, 1943—1304/346276-9.
- ⁴⁵ Rahn to AA, April 12th and 17th, 1943—1276/343303-4; 1276/343308-9, 1276/343318.
- ⁴⁸ Note pour le Colonel Guiot (du Colonel du Jonchay), Tunis, February 5th, 1943—1304/346301-4.
 - ⁴⁷ Rahn to AA, April 12th, 1943—1276/343305.
 - 48 Note pour le Colonel Guiot, Tunis, February 5th, 1943-1304/346301-4.
- ⁴⁹ Rapport du Lt-Cl Cristofiny, Chef de la Mission Militaire Française en Tunisie sur l'activité de cette mission pendant le mois de janvier 1943, Tunis, February 1st, 1943—1304/346295–300.

 ⁵⁰ Ibid.
- ⁵¹ Rapport du Chef de Bataillon Curnier sur les buts et l'activité de la Mission Militaire Française et les possibilités de nouvelles phalanges, Tunis, February 24th, 1943—1304/346233–8.
- ⁵² Rapport du Chef de Bataillon Curnier Commandant de la Mission Militaire Française en Tunisie sur les buts et l'activité de cette mission pendant le mois de mars 1943, Tunis, April 3rd, 1943—1304/346257-61.
 - ⁵⁸ Rahn to AA, April 12th, 1943—1276/343305.
 - ⁵⁴ Rapport . . ., Tunis, April 3rd, 1943—1304/346257-61.
 - 55 Rahn to AA, April 23rd, 1943—1276/343325.
 - ⁵⁶ Rahn to AA, December 13th, 1942—1276/343121.
- ⁵⁷ Rahn to AA, January 26th, 1943—1276/343229; entry undated (February 20th or 21st, 1943?)—1260/330173.
 - ⁵⁸ Rahn to AA, November 25th, 1942—1276/343058.
 - ⁵⁹ Rahn to AA, December 17th, 1942—1276/343134-6.
- ⁶⁰ See, for instance, Rahn to the Paris Embassy, December 3rd, 1942—1276/343090-1.
- ⁶¹ Henri Cambon, *Histoire de la régence de Tunis*, Paris, 1948, pp. 250-7.
 - 62 Tippelskirch, op. cit., p. 348.
- 63 Erdmannsdorff to Rahn, Berlin, February 16th, 1943—1260/339143; Rahn to AA, February 17th, 1943—1276/343243.
 - 64 Rahn to Ribbentrop, December 13th, 1942—1276/343117-20.
 - 65 Schnurre's despatch, Berlin, November 23rd, 1942—1246/337288-9.
 - ⁶⁶ Woermann to Rahn, Berlin, December 27th, 1942—1246/337337-8.
 - 67 Rahn to AA, December 30th, 1942—1276/343164-7.
 - 68 Rintelen to Rahn, Berlin, December 16th, 1942—1246/337311.
 - ⁶⁹ Rahn to Ribbentrop, December 13th, 1942—1276/343117-20.
 - ⁷⁰ L. Simoni, Berlin, l'ambassade d'Italie, Paris, 1947, p. 339.
 - 71 Ribbentrop to Rahn, December 10th, 1942—71/51314.
- ⁷² Ribbentrop to the Rome Embassy, Berlin, December 14th, 1942—975/303000-2.
- ⁷³ Notes of the Italian Government for the Reich Rome Embassy of December 24th, 1942, cited in Woermann's despatch to Rahn, Berlin, December 27th, 1942—1246/337337–8.
 - ⁷⁴ Mackensen's despatch, Rome, December 29th, 1942—2213/474694-5.
- 75 Woermann's notes, Berlin, December 21st, 1942—2213/474676-7; notes of the Italian Embassy, Berlin, December 19th, 1942—2213/464678.
- ⁷⁶ These conversations are reported in Mackensen's despatch, Rome, January 2nd, 1943—132/123750-6.

- ⁷⁷ Weizsäcker to the Rome Embassy, Berlin, January 2nd, 1943—2213/474697-8.
 - ⁷⁸ Luther to Rahn, Berlin, November 21st, 1942—1246/337284-7.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid.; Megerle to Woermann, Special train *Westfalen*, November 26th, 1942—975/303056-8; Megerle's notes for Krümmer, Fuschl, November 20th, 1942—975/303059-61.
 - 80 Luther to Rahn, Berlin, November 21st, 1942—1246/337284-7.
 - 81 Grobba's notes, Berlin, December 3rd, 1942—930/297919-34.
 - 82 Mackensen's despatch, Rome, November 15th, 1942-71/51285-6.
 - 83 Chef OKW to AA, December 3rd, 1942-71/51304.
- 84 Woermann's notes for Ribbentrop, Berlin, December 8th, 1942—71/51301-3 (or 975/303025-7).
- 85 Vortragsnotiz vom Chef Amt Ausl/Abwehr für Chef OKW, Berlin, December 9th, 1942-975/303018-9.
 - 86 Weizsäcker's notes, Berlin, December 10th, 1942-975/303015-6.
 - 87 Mackensen's despatch, Rome, December 11th, 1942-975/303010-2.
- 88 Woermann's notes for the Italian Embassy, Berlin, December 10th, 1942—2213/474668-70.
 - 89 Weizsäcker's notes, Berlin, December 12th, 1942—2213/474671-2.
 - 90 Rahn's despatch, November 21st, 1942-2213/474652-4.
 - ⁹¹ Rahn to AA, December 27th, 1942—1276/343162-3.
 - 92 Woermann's notes, Berlin, December 9th, 1942—975/303017.
 - 93 Weizsäcker's notes, Berlin, December 10th, 1942—975/303015-6.
- ⁹⁴ Woermann's notes for the Italian Embassy, Berlin, December 10th, 1942—2213/474668-70.
 - 95 Mackensen's despatch, Rome, December 11th, 1942—975/303010-2.
 - ⁹⁶ Mackensen's despatch, Rome, December 12th, 1942—975/303009.
- ⁹⁷ Weizsäcker's notes on conversation with Canaris, Berlin, December 10th, 1942—975/303015.
 - 98 Rahn to AA, December 12th, 1942—71/51327-8.
 - ⁹⁹ Weizsäcker's notes, Berlin, December 12th, 1942—2213/474671-2.
 - 100 Sonnleithner to Weizsäcker, Berlin, December 15th, 1942—2213/474623.
- 101 Canaris notes entitled Aktenvermerk über die Massnahmen des Amts Ausl/Abwehr, die auf dem Abw. II-Gebiet in Franz. Nordafrika getroffen bzw. vorbereitet wurden, Berlin, December 14th, 1942—975/302998-9.
 - ¹⁰² Notes of the Italian Embassy, Berlin, December 19th, 1942—2213/474678.
- ¹⁰³ Woermann to the Paris Émbassy, Berlin, December 8th, 1942—975/303021.
 - ¹⁰⁴ Woermann to Rahn, Berlin, December 4th, 1942—1246/337280.
- 105 Woermann to the Paris Embassy, Berlin, December 8th, 1942—975/303020-1
- ¹⁰⁶ Rahn to AA, December 1st and 2nd, 1942—1276/343083-4 and 1276/343087; Rahn to the Paris Embassy, December 2nd, 1942—1276/343088.
 - ¹⁰⁷ Grote's notes, Berlin, December 12th, 1942—2213/474679.
 - 108 Italian Embassy notes, Berlin, December 19th, 1942—2213/474678.
- ¹⁰⁹ Woermann to the Rome Embassy, Berlin, December 27th, 1942—2213/474685-7.
 - ¹¹⁰ Mackensen's despatch, Rome, January 2nd, 1942—132/123750–6.
 - 111 Felix Garas, Bourguiba et la naissance d'une nation, Paris, 1956, p. 128.
- ¹¹² Dispatch from the Rome Embassy transmitted to Rahn from Berlin, January 20th, 1943—1260/339031.
 - ¹¹³ Habib Bourguiba, La Tunisie et la France, Paris, 1954, pp. 177-82.
- ¹¹⁴ Rahn to AA, January 26th and February 1st, 1943—1276/343228 and 1276/343232-3.

- ¹¹⁵ Rahn to AA, December 22nd, 1942—1276/343147-56.
- ¹¹⁶ Mackensen's despatch, Rome, January 2nd, 1943—132/123750-6; Rahn to AA, December 22nd, 1942—1276/343147-56.
 - 117 Ibid.
- 118 Schmieden to the Rome Embassy, Special train, January 7th, 1943—71/51284; Mackensen to AA, Rome, January 11th, 1943—71/51301-3.
 - ¹¹⁹ Rahn to AA, January 23rd, 1943—1276/343217-24.
 - ¹²⁰ Rahn to AA, January 7th, 1943—71/51386.
 - ¹²¹ Rahn to AA, January 1st, 1943—1276/343171-2.
 - ¹²² Rahn to AA, January 3rd, 1943—1276/343176-7.
 - ¹²³ Rahn to AA, January 11th, 1943—1276/343185-91.
- ¹²⁴ Woermann to Rahn, Berlin, January 29th, 1943—1260/339863; Rahn to AA, February 2nd, 1943—1276/343235-7.
- ¹²⁵ Feldgendarmerie-Kommando Sfax to Major Seubert, January 21st, 1943 —1304/346399-401.
- 126 Oberleutnant von dem Hagen's report and covering letters,—1304/346335—8; unsigned report, probably from an Arab source—1304/346339-44.
 - ¹²⁷ Möllhausen to Rahn, March 4th, 1943—71/51408-9.
 - ¹²⁸ Rahn to AA, February 2nd, 1943—1276/343235-7.
- ¹²⁹ Möllhausen to AA, February 24th and March 1st, 1943—1276/343259 and 1276/343263.
 - ¹³⁰ Möllhausen to AA, February 24th, 1943—1276/343259.
- 131 Despatch from the Rome Embassy of February 11th, 1943, transmitted to Rahn by Erdmannsdorff, Berlin, February 16th, 1943—1260/339143; Rahn to AA, February 17th, 1943—1276/343243.
 - ¹³² H. Cambon, op. cit., p. 252.
 - ¹³³ Möllhausen to AA, February 26th, 1943—1276/343260.
- ¹³⁴ Möllhausen to AA, March 3rd, 1943—1276/343267. The German authorities succeeded in obtaining the minutes of the Bey-Estèva conversation.
 - ¹³⁵ Möllhausen to AA, March 5th and 7th, 1943—1276/343268-9.
 - ¹³⁶ Rahn to AA, April 6th, 1942—1276/343290-2; London, op. cit., pp. 50-1.
- 137 Alal al-Fasi, The Independence Movements in Arab North Africa, Washington, 1954, pp. 58-9 and 73; Cambon, op. cit., p. 279.
 - ¹³⁸ al-Fasi, op. cit., pp. 73-4; Cambon, op. cit., p. 291.
 - ¹³⁹ Rahn to AA, January 25th, 1943—1276/343228.
 - ¹⁴⁰ Rahn to AA, February 1st, 1943—1276/343232-3.
 - ¹⁴¹ Woermann to Rahn, Berlin, January 28th, 1943—1260/339056.
 - 142 Bergmann's despatch, Berlin, February 6th, 1943-1260/339145.
 - ¹⁴³ Möllhausen to AA, February 22nd, 1943—1276/343252-3.
 - ¹⁴⁴ Rahn to Möllhausen, Berlin, February 25th, 1943—1260/339187.
 - ¹⁴⁵ Woermann to Möllhausen, Berlin, February 23rd, 1943—1260/339174.
- ¹⁴⁶ Möllhausen to AA, February 22nd, 1943—1276/343252-3; Woermann to Möllhausen, Berlin, February 23rd, 1943—1260/339174.
 - ¹⁴⁷ Möllhausen to AA, March 2nd, 1943—1276/343266.
- ¹⁴⁸ Möllhausen to AA, February 26th, 1943—1276/343261; Chenik's statement on the return of the Néo-Destour leaders—1276/343262.
- ¹⁴⁹ The French translation of his Rome broadcast is cited by Habib Bourguiba, op. cit., pp. 182–4. See ibid., pp. 309–12, for Bourguiba's explanations of his activity at that time.
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 - ¹⁵¹ Canaris's notes, Berlin, December 14th, 1942—975/302998-9.
 - ¹⁵² Ibid
 - ¹⁵³ Woermann's notes, Berlin, December 24th, 1942—2213/474682-3.

- ¹⁵⁴ Notes of the Italian Embassy, Berlin, December 24th, 1942—2213/474684.
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¹⁵⁶ Grobba's notes, Berlin, December 28th, 1942—2213/474688.

157 Woermann's notes for the Italian Embassy, Berlin, December 28th, 1942—2213/474692-3.

¹⁵⁸ Mackensen's despatch, Rome, January 2nd, 1943—132/123750-6.

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Salzburg, June 26th, 1943—71/51455.

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 - ¹⁶⁵ K. Assmann, Deutsche Schicksalsjahre, Wiesbaden, 1950, p. 370.
 - ¹⁶⁶ E. Rommel, Krieg ohne Hass, Heidenheim, 1950, pp. 388-9.

¹⁶⁷ Assmann, op. cit., p. 371.

¹⁶⁸ H. Cambon, op. cit., p. 285.

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¹⁷¹ Le Lt-Colonel Aviateur Christian du Jonchay à Monsieur Pierre Laval, Chef du Gouvernement, Tunis, April 9th, 1943—1304/346276-9.

¹⁷² Woermann to Rahn, Berlin, April 16th, 1943—1260/339363.

- 173 Draft reply of Rahn to Woermann's despatch, April 17th, 1943—1260/339363-4.
 - ¹⁷⁴ Rahn to AA, April 12th, 1943—1276/343303-4.

¹⁷⁵ Rahn to AA, April 17th, 1943—1276/343318.

- ¹⁷⁶ Rahn to Ribbentrop, April 1st, 1943—1276/343287-9.
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¹⁷⁸ Rahn, op. cit., p. 217.

¹⁷⁹ Mackensen's despatch, Rome, May 7th, 1943—2213/474701.

¹⁸⁰ Rahn, op. cit., p. 220.

- ¹⁸¹ Hencke to Rintelen and Sonnleithner, Berlin, May 6th, 1943—975/302986-7.
- ¹⁸² Tippelskirch, op. cit., p. 354; Survey of International Affairs, Hitler's Europe, London, 1954, p. 310.

CONCLUSION

- ¹ Ambassador Prüfer's notes, no. 14, Berlin, June 17th, 1943—K879/K221519–25.
- ² Prüfer to Adel Arslan, December 21st, 1942; Adel Arslan to Prüfer, Istanbul, February 6th, 1943—K880/K221549-51.
- ³ The Ankara Embassy to Ambassador Prüfer, Ankara, February 17th, 1942—K880/K221548.
 - ⁴ Ettel to Leverkühn, Berlin, September 29th, 1943—930/298100-1.
 - ⁵ Notes of November 1942—January 1943—K880/K221564–5.
- ⁶ See, for instance, collection of the Propaganda Ministry documents entitled *Flugblattpropaganda in arabischen Ländern* (Leaflet-propaganda in Arab countries)—DZA Potsdam, RMVP 712.

- ⁷ Text—71/51429 and 83/61475.
- ⁸ Mackensen to AA, Rome, May 12th, 1943-71/51439-40.
- ⁹ Mackensen to AA, June 1st, 1943—71/51446–8.
- ¹⁰ Hencke's notes, Berlin, May 27th, 1943—71/51444.
- ¹¹ Mackensen to AA, May 12th and June 1st, 1943—71/51439-40 and 71/51446-8.
 - ¹² Mackensen to AA, June 25th, 1943—71/51453-4.
 - ¹³ Hencke's notes, Berlin, May 27th, 1943—71/51444.
 - ¹⁴ Prüfer's notes, Berlin, July 1st, 1943—71/51457-8.
 - ¹⁵ Ettel's notes, Berlin, March 27th, 1943—930/298149.
 - ¹⁶ Grobba's notes, Paris, September 11th, 1943—71/51462.
 - 17 M. Pearlman, The Mufti of Jerusalem, London, 1947, p. 50.
 - ¹⁸ From the Mufti's Berlin radio broadcast of March 1st, 1944.
- ¹⁹ Schnurre's notes entitled Aufzeichnung betreffend arabische Lehrabteilung (Notes concerning the Arab training detachment), Salzburg, June 26th, 1943—71/51455.
 - ²⁰ Prozess VII, Vol. XXV, p. 6795.
 - ²¹ The Arab War Effort, Washington, 1947, pp. 43-6.
 - ²²Congressional Record, Vol. 92, Pt. 3, col. 3460.
- ²³ Pearlman, op. cit., p. 59; J. C. Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine*, New York, 1950, pp. 128–30 and 173–4; G. Kirk, *The Middle East in the War*, London, 1954, p. 321.
- ²⁴ Pearlman, op. cit., p. 65; The Arab War Effort, pp. 20-1; The Arab Higher Committee, New York, 1947; Ettel's notes, Berlin, January 1943—1473/367923.
 - ²⁵ Prüfer's notes, Berlin, May 17th, 1943—71/51442-3.
- ²⁶ Hajj Amin el-Huseini to Ribbentrop, Berlin, July 25th, 1943—The Arab Higher Committee, loc. cit.; Hajj Amin el-Huseini to Himmler—ibid.; see also Prozess XI, p. 76, and separate judgment of Justice Powers.
 - ²⁷ The Arab Higher Committee, loc. cit.
- ²⁸ Le Dossier Eichmann et 'la solution finale de la question juive', Paris, 1960, pp. 108-9 and 143; The Arab Higher Committee, loc. cit.; S. Einstein, Eichmann, Chefbuchhalter des Todes, Frankfurt a/M, 1961, pp. 165-8.
 - ²⁹ M. Khadduri, *Independent Iraq*, London, 1960, pp. 241-3.
 - ³⁰ A. S. Kirkbride, A Crackle of Thorns, London, 1956, pp. 153-63.
- ³¹ Y. Famchon, M. Leruth, L'Allemagne et le Moyen Orient, Analyse d'une pénétration économique contemporaine, Paris, 1957.
- ³² Le Testament politique de Hitler. Notes recueillies par Martin Bormann, Paris, 1959, pp. 146-7.
 - 33 The Hossbach protocol—PS-386, IMT, Vol. XXV.
- ³⁴ Melchers's memorandum, Berlin, December 9th (?), 1940—DGFP, Vol. XI, no. 481, pp. 826-9.
- 35 L. Hirszowicz, Hitlerowski plan podziału Afryki ze stycznia 1942, Sprawy Miedzynarodowe, no. 12/1961, pp. 90-97.
- ³⁶ Testament politique de Hitler, loc. cit., note no. X of February 17th, 1945, pp. 101-8.
 - 37 J. C. Fuller, The Second World War, London, 1948, p. 91.
- 38 W. Hubatsch, Hitlers Weisungen für die Kriegsführung 1939-1945, Frankfurt a/M, 1962, p. 120.
 - ³⁹ Ibid., pp. 131–2.
 - ⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 134-6.
- ⁴¹ From Georgi Dymitroff's report to the VIIth Congress of the Communist International, Moscow, 1935.

WORLD BACKGROUND

EVENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

January 30th, 1933—Hitler becomes Reich Chancellor.June 18th, 1935—Anglo-German naval agreement.

October 10th, 1935—Italian aggression against Abyssinia.

1936

January 20th-March 1st—Strikes and demonstrations in Syria.

March 7th—Remilitarisation of the Rhineland. Germany denounces Locarno.

April 19th—Outbreak of the Arab rebellion in Palestine.

July 18th—Outbreak of the civil war in Spain.

August 26th—Anglo-Egyptian treaty signed.

October 25th—Italo-German agreement. Axis formation. October 29th—General Bekr Sidqi's coup in Iraq. Formation of Hikmet Suleiman Government.

November 11th—Peel Commission leaves for Palestine.

November 13th—Franco-Lebanese treaty signed.

December 22nd—Franco-Syrian treaty concluded.

1937

July 7th—Peel Commission report on Palestine partition.

September 8th-10th—Palestine defence committees meet in Bloudan.

November 5th—Hitler informs military chiefs of early war plans (Hossbach protocol).

1938

March 12th—Anschluss with Austria.

WAR OPERATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

GERMAN-ARAB RELATIONS

1937

June 1st—Neurath's directives on German attitude to Palestine partition.

November-December-Dr. Abd el-Fattah Imam's Berlin visit. End of November-Baldur von Schirach's trip to the East.

1938

January—Khalid al-Hud al-Qarqani's German visit.

WORLD BACKGROUND

EVENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

April 16th—Anglo-Italian agreement on the Mediterranean and Red Sea.

April—Guerrilla activity in Palestine intensified.

May 30th—Hitler decides to dismember Czechoslovakia.

May-September—Nazi threat to Czechoslovakia. Crisis in Europe.

September 29th-30th—The Munich conference.

November 7th-11th—Arab-Moslem Cairo Interparliamentary Congress on Palestine. November 9th—Woodhead Commission report on Palestine.

1939

February 7th-March 17th-London conference on Palestine.

March 15th/16th—Germans enter Prague. Bohemia and Moravia Protectorate established. March 21st—German demands on Poland. March 31st—British guarantees for

April 13th—British guarantees for Rumania and Greece.

Poland.

April 28th—Germany renounces naval agreement with Britain.

May 12-Anglo-Turkish declaration.

May 17th—British White Paper on Palestine

May 22nd—Pact of Steel signed.

WAR OPERATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

GERMAN-ARAB RELATIONS

July 23rd-August 27th—Fuad-bey Hamza's German visit.

September 29th—Germany's decision on diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia.

1939

January 17th-February 18th-German envoy Grobba's Jidda visit.

April—Hentig's trip to the Middle East.

May-July—Khalid al-Hud al-Qarqani's Berlin visit.

WORLD BACKGROUND

EVENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

June 23rd—French-Turkish declaration.
Agreement on cession of Alexandretta to Turkey.

September 1st—German invasion of Poland.September 3rd—England and France declare war on Germany.

November 30th—Outbreak of Soviet-Finnish war.

1940

March 31st—Formation of Rashid Ali el-Kilani's Government in Iraq.

 April 9th—German invasion of Denmark and Norway.
 May 10th—German invasion of Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg. Churchill becomes Prime Minister.

June 10th—Italy declares war on Britain and France.

June 19th—Iraqi Ministers, Nuri Said and Naji Shawkat, leave for Turkey.

June 22nd—French-German armistice.

June 23rd—Fall of Ali Maher's Government in Egypt.

June 24th-French-Italian armistice.

July 7th—Ciano's Berlin visit.

July 16th—Hitler's directive on operation 'Sea Lion'.July 19th–20th—Ciano's Berlin visit.

WAR OPERATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

GERMAN-ARAB RELATIONS

July 17th-German-Saudi arms deal.

September 3rd—Egypt severs diplomatic relations with Germany. September 5th—Iraq severs diplomatic relations with Germany.

1940

June 12th—Egypt severs diplomatic relations with Italy.

July 3rd—Papen-Naji Shawkat conversation.

July 7th—Italian declaration on independence, territorial integrity of Fertile Crescent countries.

WORLD BACKGROUND

EVENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

August 13th—'Battle of Britain' started.

September 5th—Churchill notifies
Parliament on reinforcements for
Middle East.

September 27th—Tripartite Pact signed.

October 23rd—Hitler-Franco meeting at Hendaye.

October 24th—Hitler-Pétain meeting at Montoire.

October 28th—Italian aggression against Greece.

November 12th—Hitler's directive 18 on co-operation with France and Spain.

November 12th-13th—Molotov's visit to Berlin.

December 5th—Hitler sets middle of May 1941 for attack on U.S.S.R. Cavallero replaces Badoglio as Chief of Italian General Staff.

December 11th—Hitler relinquishes idea of taking Gibraltar.

December 13th—Hitler's directive 20 on operation 'Marita'. Laval removed from Vichy Government.

December 18th—Hitler's directive 21 'Fall Barbarossa'.

December 19th—Comando Supremo asks for German assistance.

December 29th—New French High Commissioner, General Henri Dentz, arrives in Levant.

WAR OPERATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

GERMAN-ARAB RELATIONS

August-October-Haddad's first visit to Europe.

End of August—Italian Armistice Control Commission arrives in Levant.

Beginning of September—Naji Shawkat's second visit to Turkey.

September 10th—Ciano-Mackensen conversation on Axis co-operation with Arab nationalists.

September 13th-18th—Italy's Egypt offensive.

September-October—Italo-German conversations on Arab declaration.

October 23rd—Radio broadcast of Axis declaration on Arab problems.

December 5th—Repetition of Axis Arab declaration.

December 9th—Wavell's offensive in the Western Desert.

WORLD BACKGROUND

EVENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

1941

January 11th—Hitler's directive 22 on German assistance to Italy.

End of January—Government crisis in Iraq.
January 31st—General Taha el-Hashimi appointed Iraq Premier.

February 12th—Eden leaves for Middle East.
February 27th—Bread riots, general strike in Syria.
February 28th—Anti-British conspiracy at Mufti's house in Baghdad.

March 6th—Iraq's Foreign Minister, es-Suweidi, meets Eden in Cairo. March 31st-April 4th—General strike in Lebanon. April 1st/2nd—Coup d'état in Iraq.

April 6th—German attack on Greece and Yugoslavia.

May 29th—Eden in Mansion House speech supports Arab demands.

WAR OPERATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

GERMAN-ARAB RELATIONS

1941

January-February—Hentig's mission in Syria.

January 22nd—Haddad again to Europe.

February 6th—Operation 'Sunflower'. Germans land in Africa. February 12th—Rommel in Libya.

February 12th—Haddad arrives in Berlin.

February-March—Period of intense Auswärtiges Amt Arab activity.

March 31st—Rommel starts Western Desert offensive.

April 10th—Hitler agrees to supply Iraq arms.

April 15th—Ettel's conversation with King Farouk's representative.

May 2nd—Outbreak of hostilities in Iraq.

May 3rd—Hitler agrees to intervene in Iraq.

May 8th—Naji Shawkat arrives in Ankara.

May 16th—Capitulation of Italian forces in Ethiopia.

May 23rd—Paris protocols on Syria and Lebanon signed. Hitler's directive 30 on aid to Iraq.

May 20th-31st—Germans occupy Crete.

May 31st—Armistice in Iraq.
End of May—Kesselring and air
force move from Sicily to Eastern
Front.

WORLD BACKGROUND

EVENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

June 8th—General Catroux proclaims termination of mandate and Syrian, Lebanese independence.

June 22nd—War against U.S.S.R. starts.

December 1st—Goering-Pétain meeting at Saint-Florentin-en-Bourgogne.
December 2nd—Hitler's directive 38. Kesselring appointed C.-in-C. Southern Front.
December 5th—Soviets open counter-offensive at Moscow.
December 7th—Japanese attack on

Pearl Harbour.

1942

February 2nd-7th—Political crisis and British *coup* in Egypt. Formation of Nahhas-pasha's Government.

April 5th—Hitler's directive 41 on operations on Soviet front in 1942.
April 29th–30th—Hitler-Mussolini Berchtesgaden conference on war in Mediterranean.

WAR OPERATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

GERMAN-ARAB RELATIONS

June 8th-July 14th—British and Free French campaign in Levant.

July—Germans form Arab training detachment.

August 25th—British, Soviet forces enter Iran.

November 6th—Mufti arrives in Berlin.

November 18th—Auchinleck's offensive in Western Desert ('Crusader').

November 28th—Hitler-Mufti conversation. Hitler vetoes publishing Arab declaration.

1942

January 21st-February 5th—Rommel's offensive.

May—Italo-German agreement on exchanging Arab for Indian war prisoners.

German plans to follow Caucasus conquest.

March 31st-May 18th—Ciano, Ribbentrop, Mufti and el-Kilani exchange letters.

WORLD BACKGROUND EVENTS IN THE MIDDLE **EAST**

June 28th-Start of	German offen-
sive towards the	Volga and the
Caucasus.	•

October 3rd—Stalingrad battle opens.

November 11th—Germans enter unoccupied France.

November 19th—Soviet counteroffensive launched on the Volga.

WAR OPERATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

May 26th-July 1st—Rommel attacks in Egypt and reaches el-Alamein.

GERMAN-ARAB RELATIONS

June 26th—Weizsäcker's instructions on attitude to Egyptian politics.

July 2nd—Axis' declaration on Egypt.

July 2nd-4th—Mussolini's and Ciano's proposals on occupation régime for Egypt.

July-October—Italo-German controversy over the above.

End of July—Mufti demands official recognition as leader of Arab national movement.

July 29th—Mufti's memorandum on utilisation of DAL.

August 30th-31st—Battle of Alam el-Halfa.

September 12th—OKW—el-Kilani agreement on DAL.
October 1st-12th—Ettel's Rome mission.

October 23rd—El-Alamein battle opens.

November 7th/8th—Operation
'Torch': Anglo-American landing in North Africa.

November 10th—German landing in Tunisia.

November 18th—Mufti's memorandum to OKW on using Maghreb Arabs.

November 21st—Directives on German Maghreb propaganda.

December 1st—Liberation of Néo-Destour leaders in Tunisia.

December 8th—Bourguiba and companions leave Marseilles prison.

December 14th—Hitler against Mufti's proposals on Maghreb.

WORLD BACKGROUND

EVENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

1943

January 16th-17th—Iraq declares war on Germany, Italy and Japan.

February 2nd—German capitulation at Stalingrad.

September 3rd—Allied forces land in Calabria. Italy capitulates.

Middle of October—Arab exiles group expelled from Turkey.

1944

June 6th—Second Front opens.

September 20th—London agrees on Jewish Brigade.

October 7th—Alexandria protocol on formation of League of Arab

States.

1945

February 4th-12th—The Yalta conference.

March 22nd—Arab League Pact signed at Cairo.

March 24th—Egypt declares war on

Germany.

March 27th—Syria and Saudi Arabia declare war on Germany.

April 25th—San Francisco conference. UNO founded.
May 8th—War ends in Europe.

WAR OPERATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

GERMAN-ARAB RELATIONS

1943

January 2nd—Italo-German Rome conference on Tunisia.
Beginning of January—Germans surrender Bourguiba and companions to Italy.
January—DAL moved to Tunisia.

May 13th—Capitulation of Axis forces in Tunisia.

November 2nd—Protest meeting in Berlin at Balfour Declaration anniversary. Ribbentrop's and Himmler's telegrams to Mufti read.

1944

November 1st—'Independent Arab Brigade' formed; embraces Wehrmacht's Arab detachments.

1945



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